


THE GREAT DESIGN



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Public.Resource.Org

<https://archive.org/details/greatdesigntwole00wilc>

THE GREAT DESIGN

Two Lectures on the Smithson Bequest by John Quincy Adams



*Delivered at Quincy and Boston in November 1839
now first published together from contemporary
printed and manuscript texts*

Edited, with an Introduction, by
Wilcomb E. Washburn

Foreword by L. H. Butterfield



Washington, 1965

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The costs of printing this publication have been borne in part
by a grant to the Smithsonian Institution
from the Link Foundation

SMITHSONIAN PUBLICATION NO. 4643

Lecture II by John Quincy Adams copyright © 1965
by The Massachusetts Historical Society
All rights reserved

PRODUCED BY THE MERIDEN GRAVURE COMPANY

Designed and printed by The Stinehour Press, Lunenburg, Vermont
Illustrations printed by The Meriden Gravure Company, Meriden, Connecticut
Bound by J. F. Tapley Company, Long Island City, New York

Contents

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Foreword | 7 |
| Introduction | 13 |
| Editor's Note | 39 |
| Lecture I | 43 |
| Lecture II | 65 |

Notes on the Illustrations

PHOTOGRAPHIC portraits of John Quincy Adams and Joseph Henry, a page of Adams's manuscript, two broadsides issued upon the death of Adams, and Henry's preliminary "Programme of Organization" of the Smithsonian Institution appear as illustrations in this book. The photograph of Adams is reproduced from a daguerreotype, from the gallery of Southworth and Hawes, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the gift of I. N. Phelps Stokes, Edward S. Hawes, Alice Mary Hawes, and Marion Augusta Hawes, 1937, and has been cropped. The photograph of Henry is from the gallery of M. B. Brady in Washington, c. 1860. The manuscript is from the Adams Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. The broadsides are from the Broadside Collection in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. Henry's "Programme" is discussed in the Introduction, pp. 31-32.

Foreword

RUMINATING in his diary during one of the few intervals of leisure he enjoyed—or, rather, was forced to accept—in his very long and very strenuous life as a public servant, John Quincy Adams in August, 1830, quoted two classical writers on the subject of immortality:

“It is,” says Cicero, “a tacit judgment of Nature herself, and the greatest argument in favor of the immortality of souls, that all men take a deep interest in that which will happen after death.” “He plants trees,” says Statius in his *Synephebi*, “for the benefit of another century; for what purpose, if the next century were not something to him? The diligent husbandman, then, shall plant trees upon which his own eyes shall never see a berry; and shall not a great man plant laws, institutions, a commonwealth?” I have had my share in planting laws and institutions according to the measure of my ability and opportunities. I would willingly have had more. My leisure is now imposed upon me by the will of higher powers, to which I cheerfully submit, and I plant trees for the benefit of the next age, and of which my own eyes will never behold a berry. To raise forest-trees requires the concurrence of two generations; and even of my lately-planted nuts, seeds, and stones, I may never taste the fruit. *Sero arbores quae alteri seculo prosint.*

Actually Adams was not a very good arboriculturist. His grandson Henry relates in his *Education* that the finest peaches and pears from the garden in Quincy, brought into the house for seed, usually rotted on the shelves. The old gentleman was much more concerned with those other kinds of trees that he mentioned in his comments on Cicero and Statius—“laws, institutions, a commonwealth.” Of these he planted many, and among them none took deeper root or has grown to a more towering height in the century and a quarter since Adams’s death than the Smithsonian Institution.

Back of its planting lay a lifelong vision and a powerful but, to put it mildly, a difficult personality. From boyhood onward, John

Quincy Adams's mind had been on the stretch. His diligence in learning languages and his laboriousness in acquiring and recording information on every subject under the sun became legendary and the despair of his colleagues as well as his adversaries. His library shelves bulged with one of the great private collections of classical writers and, for its time, a probably unsurpassed assemblage of the transactions of the learned societies of the world. From time to time he resolved not to spend so many hours writing up the relentlessly full and regular daily entries in his diary—and then wrote fuller ones, commonly before the dawn's earliest light. Approaching the age of seventy he took up the study of Hebrew as a cure for the frustrations he suffered in trying to teach a granddaughter to read English. As Secretary of State he had spent his summers in the heats of Washington instead of by the shore of Quincy Bay in order to compile, personally, a *Report upon Weights and Measures*, which had been ordered by Congress before he took office. In it he presented all the data he had painstakingly gathered for many years, from many books, and in many countries on this abstruse subject, and in one of the longest and most Ciceronian sentences that even he ever wrote set forth a vision of international unity and felicity based on the meter. "If man upon earth be an improveable being," he began—putting into conditional form one of his most profoundly held convictions—

If man upon earth be an improveable being; if that universal peace, which was the object of a Saviour's mission, which is the desire of the philosopher, the longing of the philanthropist, the trembling hope of a Christian, is a blessing to which the futurity of mortal man has a claim of more than mortal promise; if the Spirit of Evil is, before the final consummation of things, to be cast down from his dominion over mortal men, and bound in the chains of a thousand years, the foretaste here of man's eternal felicity; then this system of common instruments, to accomplish all the changes of social and friendly commerce, will furnish the links of sympathy between the inhabitants of the most distant regions; the metre will surround the globe in use as well as in multiplied extension; and one language of weights and measures will be spoken from the equator to the poles.

The impact of these elevated sentiments on the Congress of the United States was nil, and the fate of the learned *Report*, which according to authorities on mensuration has even today not yet been entirely superseded, was an omen of what would happen to Adams's still grander schemes for the improvement of his country and his kind when he became President.

In one of the countless verses that Adams inscribed, on request, in young ladies' autograph albums, occurs the line: "The world for me is but the lions' den." It was a true insight. Like his father in regarding life as a struggle, but without his father's capacity to poke fun at himself as well as others, J. Q. Adams saw the world as some of his Puritan forebears had seen it—filled with fiery serpents that, as agents of the Prince of Darkness, had to be exterminated. "Perhaps the severest trial of righteousness," he wrote upon returning to Washington immediately after the lectures in the present volumes were delivered, "is the patient fortitude which endures, without yielding to, the perverseness of mankind."

A man with views like these might be supposed to labor under disadvantages in the give-and-take of politics. Adams did, but he converted his handicaps into edged, in fact lethal, weapons by the sheer force of effort and will. A British diplomat who did not like him described him, nevertheless, as "a bull-dog among spaniels"; and in his long second career in the House of Representatives opponents learned not to challenge him lightly. The documents printed in the present volume show why.

Adams had the conviction, so novel at the time as to seem ridiculous to many of his contemporaries, that governmental power and intellectual power are natural partners rather than adversaries; that "the star of empire," as he said at the dedication of the Cincinnati Observatory, must always be accompanied by "the star of science"; and that Washington as the capital of the greatest republic should become one of the capitals of the world of letters, arts, scholarship, and science. As President he utterly failed to convince his countrymen of the truth of these propositions. His failure was the greatest disappointment of his life, and after his enforced retirement from the Presidency he wrote in sadness to a friend that he would have to

content himself with "the slender portion of [his countrymen's] regard which may be yielded to barren good intentions, and aspirations beyond the temper of the age." While on the one hand the American people in the age of Andrew Jackson were committed to and advancing toward universal education and were producing some of the seminal ideas and books of modern times, an opposite and thoroughly anti-intellectual point of view pervaded national politics. It is perhaps not too much to say that most Congressmen of the 1820's and 1830's would as soon have been caught in adultery as in writing a book. Meanwhile the number of cultural and scientific agencies of the government actually and necessarily increased year by year. But, as A. Hunter Dupree has shown in his admirable study of *Science in the Federal Government*, they came to birth surreptitiously and had to be well disguised in the annual appropriation bills.

In these circumstances the news, in 1835, of James Smithson's bequest of "the whole of [his] property . . . to the United States of America, to found at Washington . . . an Establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men" came as an electrifying challenge to John Quincy Adams, who promptly and characteristically saw in it "the finger of Providence, compassing great events by incomprehensible means." To most other members of the government in the heyday of Jacksonianism, it was, on the contrary, a bother and a bore, although there were those who quickly sensed the possibilities it furnished for plunder and patronage, or what Adams called "jobbing for parasites, and sops for hungry incapacity."

What immediately followed is best told in Adams's own earnest narrative of 1839, supplemented by Mr. Washburn's introductory account of Adams's successful struggle over a long decade to guide "one of the noblest benefactions ever made to the race of man" into the channels its donor intended.

Adams's two lectures on Smithson's "great design," delivered in Quincy and Boston in November, 1839, are here made generally available for the first time. The first of them was originally printed in a Boston religious journal in the following spring and is here reprinted from that text because no manuscript is known to have sur-

vived. The second lecture, hitherto apparently never set in type, is printed from the author's manuscript among the Adams Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society. Since a comprehensive edition of the papers of the Adams family is being published by the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, the Society's policy is to allow only quotation from such documents (all of which are available in a copyrighted microfilm edition), never publication in full, except in *The Adams Papers*. In this case a deliberate exception has been made. Since the Smithsonian Institution is the most visible and flourishing product of John Quincy Adams's lifelong dedication to intellectual endeavor, his distinctive contribution to a Great Society in America long before the idea, to say nothing of the phrase, gained currency, no more appropriate occasion for issuing his own account of its hazardous beginnings could be imagined than the celebration of the Smithsonian Bicentennial in 1965. In this decision the Harvard University Press generously concurred, and so did *Life* magazine, which, through Time, Inc., has supported editorial work on the Adams Papers through the purchase of advance serial rights.

L. H. BUTTERFIELD

Editor in Chief, *The Adams Papers*
Massachusetts Historical Society

Introduction

THE story of James Smithson's bequest of a fortune to the United States of America to found, in the city of Washington, an institution "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men" is well known in general outline, but its mystery and wonder are still sustained after nearly a century and a half. When knowledge of Smithson's will, written in 1826, was communicated to the United States, the contingent residuary legatee, upon the death of Smithson's nephew, Henry James Hungerford, in 1835, John Quincy Adams resolved that its promise should be fulfilled. As President, 1825–1829, Adams had tried to convince Congress that the government should create a national university, build an observatory, send out an exploring expedition, and in other ways support science and culture directly. He had failed. Now the opportunity to accomplish some of the same ends by a private benefaction presented itself. Adams, a member of the House of Representatives from Massachusetts, was appointed chairman of the select committee of the House to which the matter was referred.¹

In preparing his first report on the bequest in 1836, Adams accepted without question the intentions and logic of the donor:

But so little are the feelings of others in unison with mine on this occasion [he noted in his diary], and so strange is this donation of half a million of dollars for the noblest of purposes, that no one thinks of attributing it to a benevolent motive. Vail intimates in his letter that the man was supposed to be insane. Bankhead thinks he must have had republican propensities; which is probable. Colonel Aspinwall conjectures that

1. For accounts of the early history of the Smithsonian Institution see Paul H. Oehser, *Sons of Science: The Story of the Smithsonian and its Leaders* (New York, 1949); Madge E. Pickard, "Government and Science in the United States: Historical Backgrounds," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, Vol. 1 (1946), 254–89, 446–81; A. Hunter Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government: A History of Policies and Activities to 1940* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957); see also the introductory chapters in Bessie Zaban Jones, *Lighthouse of the Skies: The Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory; Background and History, 1846–1955* (Washington, 1965).

Mr. Smithson was an antenuptial son of the first Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, and thus an elder brother of the late Duke, but how he came to have a nephew named Hungerford, son of a brother named Dickinson, and why he made this contingent bequest to the United States of America, no one can tell.²

Largely as a result of Adams's efforts, the necessary legislation to accept the bequest, and the proper agency to obtain the money, were created, and in 1838 Richard Rush, the agent designated to obtain the bequest, returned from England with more than \$500,000 in gold, which was deposited in the United States Treasury. The receipt of the funds signalized the start of a debate on the purpose to which the money should be applied. President Van Buren treated the issue cautiously, failing to take the initiative (suggested by Adams) in recommending ways by which the fund might be used to increase and diffuse knowledge. Congress wrangled over the matter without being able to resolve the issue. Outside advice was solicited, but merely added to the confusion.

In 1839 the disagreements in Congress arising from consideration of the Smithson bequest were compounded by the more vigorous entry of a Senatorial committee into the fray. Adams found his work as chairman of the House committee correspondingly less satisfying. On January 5, 1839, he confided to his diary that he proceeded on his work as chairman of the Smithsonian Bequest Committee "with a heavy heart, from a presentiment that this noble and most munificent donation will be filtered to nothing, and wasted upon hungry and worthless political jackals." He was forced to tell Dr. Stephen Chapin, president of the Columbian College (which

2. Adams's diary entry for Jan. 10, 1836, as extracted from *The Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, ed. by Charles Francis Adams (Philadelphia, 1874-1877) and printed in William J. Rhees, ed., *The Smithsonian Institution: Documents relative to its Origin and History*, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 17 (Washington, 1880), 764. Aaron Vail was Chargé d'Affaires of the U. S. in London; Charles Bankhead was Chargé d'Affaires of Great Britain in Washington; Col. Thomas Aspinwall was U. S. Consul in London. Vail's letter to Secretary of State John Forsyth of July 28, 1835, which is Dispatch 197, Vol. 43, Record Group 59, General Records, Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D. C., is the basis for Adams's remarks. The offending passage was omitted from the document as printed in the various reports on the Smithsonian.

was to become George Washington University), who wished to put his tottering institution under the wing of the Smithsonian Institution, that he did not believe any part of the Smithsonian fund should be applied to any school, college, university, or seminary of education, though he felt equal care should be taken to avoid doing injury to any such institution. Adams offered to resign all concern with the Smithsonian matter, however, if Chapin, or the faculty, could discover any disposition, in the President or any other member of the committee, to apply the fund to the support of the college.³

Adams felt particularly bitter toward Senator Asher Robbins of Rhode Island, whose resolution, of January 10, 1839, favoring the creation of an "institution of learning," added weight to the side of those who conceived of the Smithsonian merely as another university. Robbins, chairman of the committee of the Senate which was instituted to consider the matter jointly with Adams's select committee of the House, added insult to injury when, on February 18, 1839, he introduced a resolution asserting that it would "not be to fulfil *bona fide* the intention of the testator, nor would it comport with the dignity of the United States" to use Smithson funds to erect and support an observatory.⁴ Adams, since his Presidential Address to Congress in 1825, and even earlier, had favored the establishment of a national observatory and had already recommended that the Smithson bequest be first applied to that purpose.

The fundamental and bitter disagreements in the joint committee, recounted by Adams in his lectures, contributed to his decision to discuss the matter publicly following his return home to Quincy, at a time when he normally declined invitations to speak.⁵ The grounds of concern which motivated him to speak out are recounted by Adams in his diary entry for October 26, in which he records his decision to make the Smithsonian bequest the subject of his lecture

3. Diary entry for Jan. 5, 1839, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 771.

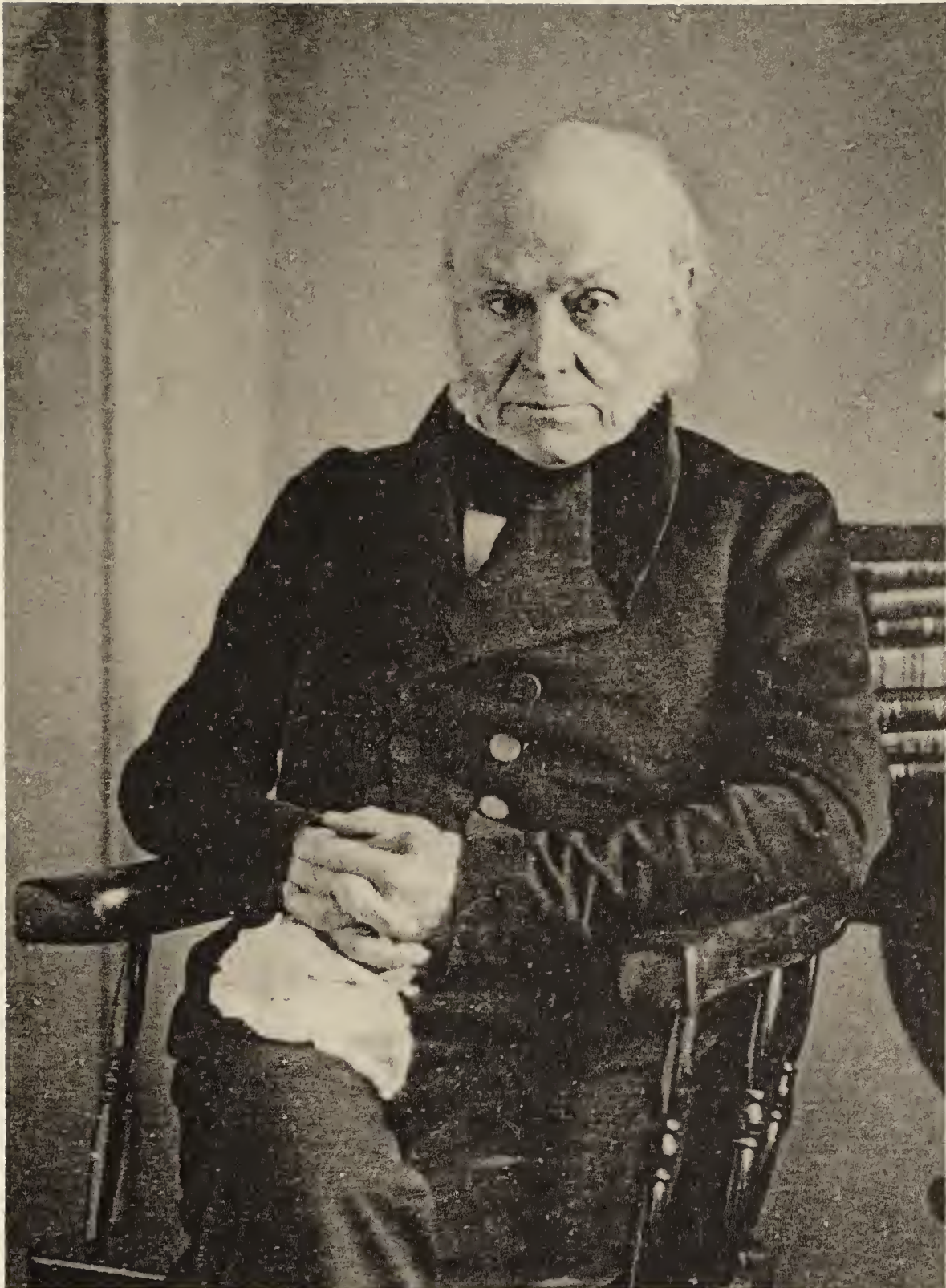
4. Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

5. See letter of Oct. 28, 1839, to George L. Curry, president of the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association in Adams's Letterbook, 1 Jan. 1837 to 22 Nov. 1839, "Private," Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass., microfilm reel 153. Adams, in this letter, makes a particular point of the exceptional nature of his decision to speak at this time. (Quotations from the Adams Papers microfilms are by permission of the Massachusetts Historical Society.)

to the Quincy Lyceum which the previous Wednesday he promised John A. Green, the president of the Lyceum, to deliver on the 20th of November, 1839. The recital is morbid but true to Adams's nature:

This subject weighs deeply upon my mind [he wrote]. The private interests and sordid passions into which that fund has already fallen fill me with anxiety and apprehensions that it will be squandered upon cormorants or wasted in electioneering bribery. The apparent total indifference of Mr. Van Buren to the disposal of the money, with his *general* professions of disposition to aid me; the assentation of all the heads of Departments, without a particle of assistance from any one of them, excepting the Attorney General, Grundy, whose favorable opinion Cambreleng, at the last session, contrived to nullify; the opposition, open and disguised, of Calhoun, Preston, and Waddy Thompson, even to the establishment of the Institution in any form; the utter prostration of all public spirit in the Senate, proved by the encouragement which they gave to the mean and selfish project of Asher Robbins to make a university, for him to be placed at the head of it; the investment of the whole fund, more than half a million of dollars, in Arkansas and Michigan State stocks; and the dirty trick of filching the ten thousand dollars from the fund last winter to pay for the charges of procuring it—are all so utterly discouraging that I despair of effecting anything for the honor of the country, or even to accomplish the purpose of the bequest—the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men. It is hard to toil through life for a great purpose with a conviction that it will be in vain; but possibly, seed now sown may bring forth some good fruit hereafter. In my report of January, 1836, I laid down all the general principles upon which the fund should have been accepted and administered. I was then wholly successful; my bill passed without opposition, and under its provisions the money was procured and deposited in the Treasury in gold. If I cannot prevent the disgrace of the country by the failure of the testator's intention, by making it the subject of a lecture, I can leave a record for future time of what I have done, and what I would have done, to accomplish the great design, if executed well. And let not the supplication to the Author of all good be wanting.⁶

6. Diary entry for Oct. 26, 1839, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, pp. 774–75. Senator William C. Preston, of South Carolina, was a member of the Senate committee considering the Smithsonian bequest; Waddy Thompson was a member of Adams's own select committee of the House; C. C. Cambreleng was chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means of the House.



John Quincy Adams

2nd W 1839.

Lecture 2.

Delivered by Geo^d - W. B. Hunt, Before the Quincy Lyceum, Wednesday 20. Nov. 1839
 And at the Masonic Temple Boston, before the Mechanic Apprentices Library Association
 Thursday 21. Nov. 1839

At the last opportunity which I enjoyed of addressing an assembly of my fellow citizens from this place I availed myself of the occasion to invite their attention to a subject of transcendent interest, not only to them, but to the welfare and honour of our Country and to the improvement of the condition of mankind upon Earth - I refer to the Bequest of James Smithson heretofore of London, of his whole fortune amounting to more than half a million of dollars, to the United States of America in trust, for the establishment at the City of Washington of an Institution to bear his name, "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

I then presented an historical narrative of the communications to Congress, by a message from President Jackson of the 17th of December 1835 of the existence of this Bequest - of the measures then adopted by Congress, accepting the Bequest, pledging the faith of the United States, that the whole fund should be faithfully applied to the purpose designated by the Testator - the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men - and authorizing the appointment by the President of an agent, commissioned to recover the funds then in the hands of Trustees, subject to the decree of the English Court of Chancery. Of the appointment of this agent in the person of Mr Richard D. Leigh - of the successful issue of his mission, and the deposit by him of upwards of five hundred thousand dollars in gold, at the Mint of the United States - to which a considerable addition reserved by the Court of Chancery, may hereafter be expected - Of the investment of the proceeds, deposited in the Treasury in Bonds at an interest of 6 percent a year of the States of Arkansas and Michigan; and of the two messages of President Van Buren, one of 6. December 1838, to both Houses of Congress - the other of the next day to the House of Representatives in answer to a call from that Body - with which two messages were communicated the important documents relating to the Bequest and the opinions of certain persons consulted by the President with regard to the future disposal of the

Holograph of first page of J. Q. Adams's lecture
 on the Smithson bequest

Adams's bitter manner should be considered in the light of the evocation of that temper written by his grandson Henry Adams in his *Education*:

Resistance to something was the law of New England nature; the boy looked out on the world with the instinct of resistance; for numberless generations his predecessors had viewed the world chiefly as a thing to be reformed, filled with evil forces to be abolished, and they saw no reason to suppose that they had wholly succeeded in the abolition; the duty was unchanged. That duty implied not only resistance to evil, but hatred of it The New Englander . . . had learned also to love the pleasure of hating; his joys were few.⁷

Adams, in his absorption in the task, which "as usual grows upon me as I proceed," soon realized that he could not say what he wanted to say in one lecture. His immersion in the task, however, had given him strength. Optimism was succeeding pessimism. Three days after writing the previous outburst, Adams calmly noted in his diary: "My main object must be to prepare for action upon it [the Smithsonian bequest] at the approaching session of Congress, and to gather facts and arguments for a last effort to save the fund from misapplication, dilapidation and waste."⁸

By October 30, Adams, approaching the close of the paper he had laid out for his single lecture on the Smithsonian bequest, had positively concluded that "one Lecture will not contain all that I wish to say upon the subject. I must overflow into a second."⁹

On November 2, "after two days of dissipation" (by which Adams meant hours of antiquarian research in the Massachusetts Archives and meetings and dinners with Boston friends), the venerable statesman returned with difficulty to his writing, but with sufficient success to be able to record in his diary: "I finished this day a Lecture on the Smithsonian bequest, but finding that I have not said half of what it was my intention to include in one discourse I

7. *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, 1918), p. 7.

8. Diary entry for Oct. 29, 1839, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 775.

9. Diary entry for Oct. 30, 1839, in Adams Papers, microfilm reel 45.

began upon a second, which if ever finished I have no doubt will be as long as the first."¹⁰

Adams, who had also agreed on October 28 to lecture before the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association of Boston, was asked by its president for the subject of his lecture. On November 5 Adams replied that his subject for the lecture, scheduled for Thursday the 14th, was "the bequest of James Smithson to the United States of America *for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men*," but that he would need more than the time of one evening to give it all. He offered to give the second on the following Thursday, or on any day between the 14th and the 21st (except Sunday), or, if such dates were inconvenient to the Association, to save the second lecture for "another season." His return to Washington by or before the 28th of the month would prevent a later delivery during 1839.¹¹

Adams's heart and mind were now fully engaged in the project. On November 6 he speculated in his diary on the effects of his coming lectures, the possible need to modify or consolidate them "if I fail here or at Boston," and the possible desirability of giving a similar lecture elsewhere. "If I can possibly rouse the public mind to take some interest in this foundation," Adams noted, "it may save the fund from being utterly wasted and lost, and the more frequently I go before the public upon it, the more chances will there be for connecting public sympathies with it. The experiment is desperate, but with a blessing it may succeed."¹²

On November 12, with the gloomy censoriousness so frequently deplored by later commentators but so essential to his purpose, Adams wrote:

10. Diary entry for Nov. 2, 1839, microfilm reel 45. The meticulous Adams recorded this date on the face of the manuscript of the lecture.

11. Adams to Curry, Oct. 28 and Nov. 5, 1839, in Letterbook, microfilm reel 153. Curry's letter of Oct. 12, 1839, asking Adams to speak; his letter of Nov. 4, 1839, asking Adams for the subject of his lecture; and his letter of Nov. 8, 1839, notifying Adams that the 14th and 21st of November had been set aside for him, are in the Adams Papers, Letters Received and Other Loose Papers, March-December 1839, microfilm reel 512.

12. Diary entry for Nov. 6, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

I finished this day, my second Lecture upon the Smithsonian bequest. But they have been written under the harrow of such distress of mind, that they are unfit to go before the public, and I fear will be found insupportably tedious and dull. I have done scarcely anything that I intended. I have not set forth at large the reasons for objecting to the application of any portion of the funds to purposes or institutes of education. I have not set forth at large the reasons for devoting the appropriations for a series of years to an astronomical observatory. There are points upon which it will be important to dwell with power in the argument to be maintained before Congress, the preparation of which will be much more laborious and difficult than that of these Lectures. The arguments against application of the funds to education are the multitudes of such institutions already existing, and the impossibility of equalising its benefits to all the people of the Union—State and Sectional jealousies, and no prospect of any evident and palpable increase of knowledge. The arguments in favour of an observatory, the history of that of Greenwich, and superadded facts.¹³

New Englanders of the early nineteenth century paid to be instructed in the “lyceums,” which brought them distinguished lecturers, but they were insistent that they get their money’s worth. A few days before Adams delivered the first of his lectures on the Smithsonian bequest to the Quincy Lyceum, “A Member” of the Lyceum wrote the *Quincy Patriot* to complain that some Lyceum meetings were starting before their scheduled time. “I believe in *punctuality*,” the writer asserted, “but to commence *before* the time is not punctuality, but *theft*. It is stealing from those who have purchased tickets a portion of their privileges.”¹⁴

The Lyceum officials took the complaint to heart and announced that John Quincy Adams would deliver the sixth lecture of the season on November 13, Wednesday evening, “commencing at seven o’clock precisely.” Perhaps to make sure that the complainants were fully qualified to exercise their prerogative to complain, the secretary’s announcement included the information that “By a vote of the Lyceum none can be admitted to the lectures without *season* tickets.” The secretary assured the townspeople, however,

13. Diary entry for Nov. 12, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

14. *Quincy Patriot*, Nov. 9, 1839.

that he would be at the door on the night President Adams spoke to sell season tickets.

Adams recorded in his diary that—

At 7 o'clock this Evening I walked to the Town Hall, and though labouring under great hoarseness, and a hacking cough delivered the first of my two lectures on the Smithsonian bequest, which took me one hour and twenty minutes. The hall was crowded to its utmost capacity with two or three women to one man. The attention of the auditory was well sustained, though parts of the discourse were evidently tiresome—a resolution of thanks was adopted with a request to me to deliver the second Lecture this day week, and the Lyceum was adjourned to next Wednesday Evening at half past six o'clock. I rode home, shortly before the Evening bell, and retired to bed with a cup of spearmint tea.¹⁵

The following day, Adams finished his "supplementary address to the members of the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association additional to the second Lecture on the Smithsonian Institution" and at four o'clock in the afternoon came to Boston to the house of his son, Charles Francis Adams, where he rested before repeating his first lecture to a Boston audience. At seven o'clock he went with his son to the Masonic Temple, where he was greeted by George L. Curry, president of the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association and others. "At half past seven," Adams wrote in his diary, "I commenced the delivery of the Lecture and finished at 40 minutes past 8. The house was hardly filled. The auditory consisted chiefly of the apprentices and their relatives. William Foster and William Sturgis were almost the only persons whom I knew in the Hall."¹⁶

The poor attendance and the unfamiliar audience may have been factors which, in addition to a sore throat brought on by two successive evenings of speech-making and the illness of his granddaughter, caused him to call off a lecture on the Smithsonian that

15. Diary entry for Nov. 13, 1839, microfilm reel 45. The Boston *Evening Transcript* reported that "Though laboring under a heavy cold, Mr. Adams spoke with a firm voice, and with his characteristic earnestness and interest, for an hour and a half. The hall was crowded with ladies and gentlemen of his native town, who are ever glad to listen to the voice of the old man."

16. Diary entry for Nov. 14, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

he had “conditionally promised” to give at Waltham on the 16th.¹⁷

Adams’s second lecture was scheduled for delivery on the following Wednesday, November 20, at the Quincy Lyceum. But as the time approached, another appointment was drawing to its conclusion. Adams’s granddaughter, Georgiana Frances Adams, daughter of his deceased son John and of his wife, Mary Catherine Hellen, who had been born in Adams’s Quincy house, was “drawing slowly but surely to her end.”¹⁸ On Tuesday, the family minister, the Reverend William P. Lunt, was called, and Adams had him pray outside the doomed child’s chamber. He himself sat with her until late in the night and retired without undressing. In anticipation of the worst, Adams handed his lecture—the manuscript from which the present lecture is for the first time printed—to Lunt, requesting that the minister deliver it should he be unable to be there.¹⁹

The following morning, the child seemed “likely to continue several days longer.” Adams called on Mr. Lunt and asked him to “take the lecture with him, and wait till 7.” The Lyceum, he noted, was adjourned to half past 6. “If the child should be so that I could attend, I would come and deliver the Lecture myself. But if I should not be there at 7, I wish him to read it.”²⁰ Adams’s meticulous concern for his audience at this trying time gives emphasis to the comment of one of his eulogists that “Mr. Adams’ habits of life were proverbially exact. He did everything by system; and therefore, everything he undertook to do, he did completely. He never forgot his appointments; because his system required that he should always remember them. No man ever lost time in waiting for him.”²¹

About three in the afternoon of the 20th, the child passed into the final agonies of death. “They were terrible,” Adams records, “but I can speak of them only in general terms.” Despite his self-control, the anguish of a grieving grandfather bursts forth several

17. Diary entry for Nov. 6 and 15, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

18. Diary entry for Nov. 18, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

19. Diary entry for Nov. 19, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

20. Diary entry for Nov. 20, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

21. William Greene, *An Oration on the Life and Character of John Quincy Adams. Delivered at Cincinnati, 25 March, 1848, before the Bar of Hamilton County, at their Request* (Cincinnati, 1848), p. 24.

times in his account of that terrible day. By 5:15 her breathing was short. At 5:50 she was gone.

I retired for the remainder of the evening to my chamber in a state approaching to stupefaction [Adams wrote]. At sunrise this morning I called on Mr. Lunt, and found that he had delivered last Evening at the Quincy Lyceum, my second Lecture on the Smithsonian bequest. He said they had waited for me till 7 o'clock, and Mr. French the Schoolmaster said he had been at my house about six o'clock, and had been told that the child was dead.²²

As Lunt was going to Boston that day, Adams asked him if he would deliver the same lecture "and the special address" to the members of the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association. Lunt promised to do so and on his way, later in the day, stopped by Adams's house where he received a letter to Curry, president of the Association, stating Adams's own inability to deliver the lecture and address in person, but noting that Mr. Lunt had "consented to deliver them for me and in my name."²³ On the 22d Lunt called to return the manuscript and to say the lecture had been well received.²⁴

On the following day, Adams received a request from Rufus A. Johnson, editor of the *Christian Register*, a Boston religious weekly, to publish the first lecture. Adams reflected that "the publication of the first lecture without the second would be premature,"²⁵ but his attitude may have been somewhat modified the following day when Mr. Lunt "lent me the Christian Register of yesterday—containing a notice of my first Smithsonian Lecture delivered at the Masonic Temple on the 14th with a personal panegyric for which I ought to humble myself before God, with confusion of face."²⁶

The panegyric commented on Adams's long record of significant action in the affairs of men, his unabated "natural force," and his

22. Diary entry for Nov. 21, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

23. Diary entry for Nov. 21, 1839, microfilm reel 45; copy of letter in Adams's own hand in Letterbook, microfilm reel 153.

24. Diary entry for Nov. 22, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

25. Diary entry for Nov. 23, 1839, microfilm reel 45. Johnson's letter, dated—probably carelessly—Nov. 24, is among Letters Received, microfilm reel 512.

26. Diary entry for Nov. 24, 1839, microfilm reel 45.

“unimpaired . . . individuality.” “There is not a more original man in the country,” it continued, “and in a high sense not a more honest one. He has in all cases acted out himself. Parties, combinations, threats, promises, friends, foes cannot control him.” The writer noted that “After filling the highest office in the gift of a free people, he thinks it no condescension to lecture before an association of apprentices.” His devotion to the improvement of his fellow man and his profound regard for the honor of his country were communicated, in the opinion of the writer, to everyone who heard his lecture.²⁷

Adams wrote Johnson on the 25th giving the editor his consent to the publication in the *Christian Register* of his first lecture on the Smithsonian bequest. “But having only one copy of it, for which I may have occasion immediately after the first meeting of Congress, I must take it with me and if it suit your convenience will send it to you at an early day from Washington.”²⁸ The promise was fulfilled on March 21, 1840, when Adams wrote Johnson enclosing “the only copy extant of the first of two Lectures on the Smithsonian bequest to the United States of America delivered before the Mechanic Apprentices Library Association on the Evening of the 14 November last.” Adams regretted that he had been “unable without inconvenience to transmit the Manuscript to you at an earlier day.”²⁹ Johnson published the first lecture in two parts in his issues of April 6 and 11, 1840, with an approving notice in the issue of April 6.³⁰

While in Washington, Adams had a copy of his second lecture made, which he sent to the members of the Boston Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association at their request, with a letter to their President in which he expressed his “peculiar disappointment” at

27. *Christian Register and Boston Observer*, Nov. 23, 1839.

28. Adams to Johnson, Nov. 25, 1839, Letterbook, microfilm reel 154.

29. Adams to Johnson, March 21, 1840, Letterbook, microfilm reel 154.

30. The location of the original manuscript, if it survived, is unknown. Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union* (New York, 1956), pp. 510–11 n., is wrong in saying that both lectures were printed. His brief account of Adams's role in the formation of the Smithsonian, in Chap. xxiii, is unsurpassed.

being unable to utter with his own lips the "brief address at the close of the Lecture" to the members of the Association.³¹

During the winter of 1839–1840 Adams undertook to bring successfully to the floor of the House of Representatives a Smithsonian bill that would incorporate his views. Though burdened with numerous other important legislative matters, he found time to do more research on the Smithsonian bequest, getting together material for a major report that he presented at the time he introduced his bill. At the same time, he had to fight off well- and ill-intentioned schemers who wanted to use Smithsonian funds to support travel to Europe, the purchase of mineralogical cabinets, and the like. To all such proposals, Adams gave a firm negative.³²

By late February Adams had the draft of his proposed Report to the House of Representatives in hand. On Sunday, February 23, 1840, instead of his usual total absorption in the sermon of the day, he chided himself on being "so absorbed in temporalities that I prepared an estimate of the cost of an Observatory, to be appended to the Report on the Smithsonian bequest bill. This was suggested by Mr. D. D. Barnard on returning the manuscript Report which I communicated to him, and which he approves."³³

On March 5, 1840, Adams presented from the Committee on the Smithsonian Bequest an amended bill, with the report which he had prepared, and various documents, to the House of Representatives. Adams's speech, in support of the bill, bears evidence of the aid which his two November lectures gave him.³⁴ His bill was, however, stillborn.

The next six years saw the Smithsonian bequest dragged back

31. Adams to Curry, Jan. 10, 1840, Letterbook, microfilm reel 154; see also diary entry for Jan. 10, 1840, microfilm reel 45. The location of the enclosed manuscript copy, if extant, is unknown. The "address" was added to the manuscript of the second lecture and is included in the present edition in the same place. Curry's letter of Dec. 23, 1839, requesting a copy of the address, is in Letters Received, microfilm reel 512.

32. E.g., diary entries for Jan. 7, 1840, and Jan. 30, 1840, microfilm reel 45.

33. Diary entry for Feb. 23, 1840, microfilm reel 45. Daniel Dewey Barnard (1796–1861), a scholarly New Englander, was the Representative in Congress from the Albany district of New York, 1839–1845.

34. Diary entry for March 5, 1840, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 778; "Proceedings in the House of Representatives," March 5, 1840, as printed in *ibid.*, pp. 202–26.

and forth between both Houses without resolution of the many issues raised by those considering the donation. Attempts were made to utilize the fund to support the National Institute for the Promotion of Science, a struggling but ill-managed association of prominent Washington cultural leaders. In response to such attempts, and to others, Adams maintained politely but inflexibly the principles he had propounded for the utilization of the Smithsonian fund.³⁵ Adams was successful in achieving stricter safeguards for preserving the integrity and substance of the fund, but he was unable to achieve a positive program for its utilization.³⁶

Visits to indifferent or uncomprehending cabinet officers, whose names ring down the halls of time in anonymity, occupied many days.³⁷ In his talk with Secretary of the Treasury John C. Spencer in 1843, the Secretary "pronounced the prejudice against my plan of an astronomical observatory insurmountable, because I had once called observatories light-houses *in* the skies. My words were light-houses *of* the skies. But Mr. Spencer sees no difference between the two phrases."³⁸

Adams fought doggedly for his views on utilizing the Smithsonian bequest, and his power, even when Robert Dale Owen became chairman of the Select Committee on the Smithsonian Bequest in 1845 (Adams remained a member), was enough to force modifications in his opponents' proposals.

Owen, in a letter to Senator Benjamin Tappan on October 30, 1845, commiserated on the fact that "our Compromise of last session was defeated by John Quincy Adams," and promised to try again in the next session of Congress with the modifications required by the situation. Although still concerned primarily with promoting common school instruction, Owen informed Tappan:

35. See, for example, diary entries for April 14, 1841, Jan. 19, 1842, June 11, 1842, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, pp. 779-80, 783-84, 787-88; see also Dupree, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-79.

36. Diary entry for Sept. 18, 1841, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 782.

37. E.g., diary entries for Sept. 16, 1841, Walter Forward, Secretary of the Treasury; March 10, 1843, John C. Spencer, Secretary of the Treasury; as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, pp. 781, 788-89.

38. Diary entry for March 10, 1843, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, pp. 788-89. The phrase is from Adams's first annual message to the Congress, Dec. 6, 1825. Bemis discusses the phrase in his Chap. XXIII, "Lighthouses of the Skies," in *op. cit.*, esp. p. 503.

I have put in [Senator Rufus] Choate's very wording about the character of the library; but have put the appropriation for the object at "not *more* than ten thousand dollars." The board, of course, can make it as much less as they please. Will that go?

Then, as evidence that Adams' hobby, though not suffered to reign paramount, has not been neglected, I have specially named astronomy as one of the branches to be taught, and, in the description of the building, have specified "a tower suitable for astronomical observations." If the old man is not satisfied with that, we shall have to carry it over his head; which I don't doubt but that we can do.³⁹

The Smithsonian Institution began to take actual shape in the spring of 1846, under Owen's leadership. On April 22, 1846, a bill to establish the Smithsonian was taken up in the Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union. Owen delivered an hour-long speech in support of the bill, dwelling on those clauses creating normal schools throughout the country for the training of teachers, in Adams's opinion "the worst feature of the bill."⁴⁰

George W. Jones, of Tennessee, moved to amend the bill by a section authorizing the whole bequest to be returned to the heirs at law, or next of kin, or residuary legatees of Smithson. "That is to say," Adams commented testily, "to deliver to them the State bonds of the State of Arkansas, Illinois, and Michigan, upon which neither interest nor principal is, or is soon likely to be, paid."⁴¹

Just as he refused to be bent by friends or enemies from his conception of right, so Adams refused to allow his own moral predilections to shape the interpretation of Smithson's will. Adams's hostility to the institution of slavery is well known. In a letter of 1847 he wrote that

The existence of this moral pestilence, now preying upon the human race, is the great evil now suffered by the race of man, an evil to be extinguished only by the Will of Man himself, and by the operation of that Will The first step to the organization of this National Will, must be

39. Owen to Tappan, Tappan Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Manuscript Division, Vol. 20, fols. 3264-66.

40. Diary entry for April 22, 1846, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 799.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 799-800.

by an improvement in popular education, and this is in my estimation so indispensable that I hold it of little importance to attempt any other.⁴²

Yet the man who could feel so strongly about popular education battled until his death against the prevalent idea of his colleagues in the Congress and in private life to use the Smithsonian fund for just such a purpose. No end, however moral, could be sought in violation of a trust, or by ignoring the duty to truth itself.

On April 23, George Perkins Marsh, of Vermont, gave an hour-long speech on the Smithsonian bequest bill: "one of the best speeches ever delivered in the House," Adams commented, "but not much in support of the bill." Marsh's purpose was to use the fund to establish a national library.⁴³

Adams entered the lists on April 28 and "made a desultory speech in support of the substitute proposed by me for the bill."⁴⁴ The debate on Adams's substitute continued the following day, but was rejected 57 to 74.⁴⁵ William J. Hough of New York moved another substitute, which Marsh amended, the most important of whose amendments provided for approximately \$25,000 to be appropriated annually for the purchase of books. The House, perhaps weary of debate and anxious for a resolution of the long-drawn-out issue, approved the bill as amended in two votes: 81 to 76 and 85 to 76. On both Adams voted in the affirmative, though not without some trepidation. As he recorded in his diary: "Thus nearly the whole proceeds of the Bequest are devoted to the annual accumulation of a great National Public Library. The best disposal of the Fund, which it has been practicable to obtain, and which, at least to a great degree will I hope escape, the usual fate of all benevolent Institutions, of being degraded into mere jobs for hungry speculation."⁴⁶

As Adams's long fight was about to bear fruit—even though the fruit was not what he had wished it to be—the man himself neared

42. Adams to William Slade, August, 1847, Letterbook, microfilm reel 155.

43. Diary entry for April 23, 1846, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 800.

44. Diary entry for April 28, 1846, as printed in Rhees, *op. cit.*, p. 801.

45. Diary entry for April 29, 1846, Adams Papers, microfilm reel 48. In the hand of an amanuensis.

46. *Ibid.*

his physical end. In the weeks before the Smithsonian bill became law, Adams went through pain-filled days and nights. In his diary for July 22, 1846, he confided: "I had a disturbed and almost sleepless night. . . . I feel as if all my bones were extracted from my body. Yet I write and notwithstanding earnest remonstrances attend my daily duties in the House."⁴⁷ And the following night: "A disturbed and desolate night—Prostrate—desponding—weary of existence."⁴⁸ On the 28th of July his amanuensis recorded in his diary: "The remnant of my life is a long disease. A succession of complaints disable me for all active exertion of body or of mind and I no sooner seem to recover from one, than I am stricken down by another. I am especially deprived of that continuity of application to particular subjects indispensable for the transaction of business public or private."⁴⁹

Adams continued faithful to his duties despite the excruciating torments he suffered in his deteriorating body. He never lost his sense of wonder, his quest for knowledge. On August 4, for example, he went to the Observatory at night to "take a glance at the moon near full."⁵⁰

August 10, 1846. The last day of the first session of the 28th Congress. "The day," Adams reported in his diary, "like all the last days of a Session of Congress was a Chaos of confusion."⁵¹ In the midst of the chaos, the final version of the Smithsonian bill, modified and changed and amended and revised after ten years of argument, log-rolling, and debate, passed the Senate 26 to 13. The President quickly signed the bill and informed the House that he had approved and signed it. The Speaker appointed Robert Dale Owen of Indiana, William J. Hough of New York, and Henry W. Hilliard of Alabama to be regents of the Institution from the House of Representatives.

47. Diary entry for July 22, 1846, in Adams's own hand from "Rubbish IV," Diary and Miscellaneous Entries, 1 June 1827 to February 1848, Adams Papers, microfilm reel 52.

48. Diary entry for July 23, 1846, in *ibid.*, microfilm reel 52.

49. Diary entry for July 28, 1846, in microfilm reel 48.

50. Diary entry for Aug. 4, 1846, microfilm reel 48.

51. Diary entry for Aug. 10, 1846, microfilm reel 48. Also in "Rubbish IV," microfilm reel 52.

The decision of the Speaker was not accepted gracefully by all. George Perkins Marsh, who later, in December, 1847, replaced Owen as a member of the Board of Regents, wrote bitterly to the bookseller and scholar John Russell Bartlett:

I shall be glad to promote your views in regard to the Smithsonian Institution, if I can do so, but I consider myself as having been so unjustly treated by the Speaker and a portion of the public press in the matter, that I have resolved to have nothing whatever to do with the concern, except to warn those charged with the purchase of books against buying anything from that swindling knave John Bohn, to whom I intend to do all the good I can, by contributing to his instruction in a doctrine of which he has no knowledge, viz. that Honesty is the best Policy. The passage of the Smithsonian bill through the House was due to my efforts, and the amendments to Owen's and Hough's bills, which changed every essential feature of them, were drawn and proposed by me. In decency, the Speaker should have put me upon the Board instead of persons whose plans had been decisively rejected, and the National Intelligencer and other papers should have given me the credit which belonged to me, instead of studiously keeping my name ought [*sic*] of sight, as they have done, because I would not, as many members do, bribe their lying reporters for once to speak the truth.⁵²

Adams returned to New England with the adjournment of the Congress. In his papers remains a "copy of the Smithsonian Act, corrected from the Roll, in the Department of State," sent him on August 12 by Francis Markoe, Jr., corresponding secretary of the National Institute of Washington, "according to my promise of yesterday." In his letter Markoe renewed "the earnest request I made in conversation, that you would make a communication giving your opinion and views upon the Smithsonian Institution, and the National Institute; (however briefly) and permit me to publish the Communication in the 4th Bulletin of the Institute, and in other ways pro bono publico."⁵³ No such opinion was published in the fourth bulletin of the ill-fated National Institute, which had hoped to utilize the Smithsonian fund for its own support and

52. Bartlett Papers, Correspondence, Sept. 1, 1846, John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R. I.

53. Adams Papers, Letters Received and Other Loose Papers, June–December, 1846, microfilm reel 535.

whose collections—such as they were—were eventually transferred to the Smithsonian. On December 3, 1846, Francis Markoe received four votes in the balloting by the Board of Regents to choose the new Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Professor Joseph Henry of Princeton received seven and was declared duly elected.⁵⁴

On November 20, 1846, in the streets of Boston, Adams was “suddenly seized with palsy” and was confined several days to bed at his son’s house on Mount Vernon Street. “From this 20th of November 1846,” this exact recorder and analyst noted in his scientific record, or diary, “my power to keep a diary or journal is annihilated, and my life is at an end.”⁵⁵ Yet despite Adams’s insistence on regarding his diary now as a “posthumous memoir,” he returned to Washington, in February of 1847, to take his seat again in the House of Representatives of the United States.

On Saturday, May 1, 1847, the cornerstone of the Smithsonian Institution building was laid. Adams recorded the event in his diary but added: “I did not attend to witness it. We called at Coleman’s to visit Mrs. George Parkman, her son and daughter, but they were out and we left cards. I walked partly home from the Capitol and walked again toward Sunset.”⁵⁶

Four days later occurred the only known meeting of John Quincy Adams and the Smithsonian’s first Secretary, Joseph Henry. Both recorded the event, but neither has given us the details the historian is greedy for. Adams, in his fragmentary diary, recorded among his visitors: “professor Joseph Henry L. L. D., Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution who had a long conversation with me on the management of the Institution—very edifying.”⁵⁷ Henry

54. William J. Rhees, ed., *The Smithsonian Institution: Journals of the Board of Regents, Reports of Committees, Statistics, Etc.*, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 18 (Washington, 1880), 12.

55. Diary entry for Nov. 20, 1846, in “Rubbish IV,” microfilm reel 52.

56. Diary entry for May 1, 1847, in *ibid.*

57. Diary entry for May 5, 1847, in *ibid.*, in Adams’s hand. In Adams’s more formal Diary for the same date, the entry prepared by an amanuensis notes a visit from “Joseph Henry, L.L.D. Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, who conversed in a very edifying manner upon the proposed management of that Establishment. Sunk as I have always apprehended it would be, into a nest of jobs for literary and Political adventurers.” Richard Rush, who recovered the Smithson bequest in England in the years 1836–1838, was another of Adams’s visitors on May 5.

wrote about the meeting that night after dinner to his wife Harriet: "spent the morning in the west part of the city visited J. Q. Adams in his 80th year remarkable memory related several interesting anecdotes of history. Exhibited to him my plans of the Smithsonian Institution with which he was pleased. I promised to furnish him with a copy."⁵⁸

On October 13, 1847, from Princeton, Henry sent Adams a preliminary printed copy of his "Programme of Organization of the Smithsonian Institution." The printed notation at the top of the program, that "This article is printed for a special purpose, but is not intended in its present style for the public," is carefully recorded by Adams in his fragmentary diary, with the comment, "Mr. Henry called upon me and conversed with me last summer at Washington. It appears however that the Institution is still to be organized." Henry apologized for being unable to present the plan to Adams in person as he had intended during a trip to Boston. He noted that the "Programme may require explanation."⁵⁹

Henry was right in thinking that the program required explanation, at least to the eighty-year-old Adams, whose suspicion of jobbery in the filling of Smithsonian positions was an ineradicable phobia. No recorded comments by Adams upon the plan are known, though Henry reminded Adams that he had promised to give any suggestions he might have. It may be noteworthy, however, that the succeeding version of the program reduces the number of officers required from three, in the initial plan, to two, and eliminates the title of "Professor" from each of the proposed positions.⁶⁰ Adams commented rather testily in his formal diary, following receipt of Henry's communication, that "the Institution is already organized

58. Henry to his wife, May 5, 1847, Smithsonian Institution Archives.

59. Adams Papers, Letters Received and Other Loose Papers, 1847, microfilm reel 536; entry for Oct. 18, 1847, in Adams's own hand, in "Rubbish IV," microfilm reel 52. The copy of the program sent Adams is reproduced in facsimile in the present volume.

60. Various printed versions of the "Programme," though not the version in the Adams Papers, are in the Smithsonian Institution Archives. For the origin of the "Programme" see Wilcomb E. Washburn, "The Museum and Joseph Henry," *Curator* (A Quarterly Publication of the American Museum of Natural History), Vol. 8, No. 1 (1965), 36.

by an Act of Congress under which this Mr. Joseph Henry has been appointed Secretary, but he has a different plan of organization which is evidently sliding into a job.”⁶¹

On November 26, 1847, Henry once more addressed Adams enclosing this time a revised copy of the program of organization, as it had been prepared for submission to the Board of Regents in December. “I will call on you when I arrive in Washington next week and shall then hope to have an opportunity of receiving your suggestions with reference to this plan,” Henry wrote.⁶² The revised plan, listing only two officers and containing several other important changes, was approved, in large part, by the Board of Regents on December 13, 1847.⁶³

No record remains of a further meeting between Henry and Adams, though Adams kept an active diary in the succeeding weeks. Nor does Adams’s diary for the remainder of his life record any further relationship between himself and Henry, or comment on the Smithsonian. On the other hand, Adams concerned himself frequently with the new observatory set up in Washington under naval auspices. He visited the establishment and its director, Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury, several times during 1847, and commented frequently upon its work.⁶⁴

At the same time Adams was at last bringing to a successful conclusion his attempt, first initiated in 1823 when he was Secretary of State, to establish an observatory at Harvard College. As chairman of the committee appointed by the overseers to examine the observatory in 1845, Adams made his usual thorough analysis of the history of the founding of the institution and evaluated its success in carrying out its mission. In his letter of August 5, 1845, to Josiah Quincy, president of Harvard University, he had solicited Quincy’s answers to a number of questions concerning the observatory and Quincy’s recommendations upon them “for the effective

61. Diary entry for Oct. 18, 1847, microfilm reel 48.

62. Letters Received, microfilm reel 536.

63. Rhees, *Journals*, p. 41.

64. See Diary entries for May 22, Nov. 14, 16, and 18, 1847, “Rubbish IV,” microfilm reel 52; see also Adams to Maury, Feb. 18, 1847, in Letterbook, microfilm reel 155.

ORDER OF PROCESSION

FOR THE FUNERAL OF THE

HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

A Representative in the Congress of the United States from the State of Massachusetts, and ex-President of the United States.

The Committee of Arrangements, pall-bearers, and mourners will attend at the Hall of the House of Representatives of the United States at 11 o'clock, A. M., on Saturday next, at which time the corpse will be in charge of the Committee of Arrangements, attended by the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives, in the Hall of the House.

At 12 o'clock, M., Funeral Services will be performed in the Hall of the House of Representatives, and immediately thereafter the procession will move to the Congressional Burial-ground, in the following order:

Military Companies.

Band of Music.

The Chaplains of both Houses.

Physicians who attended the deceased.

Committee of Arrangements:

Mr. Hudson, of Massachusetts,
Mr. Williams, of Maine,
Mr. Wilson, of New Hampshire,
Mr. Marsh, of Vermont,
Mr. Thurston, of Rhode Island,
Mr. Truman Smith, of Connecticut,
Mr. White, of New York,
Mr. Edsall, of New Jersey,
Mr. Dickey, of Pennsylvania,
Mr. Roman, of Delaware,
Mr. John W. Houston, of Delaware,
Mr. McDowell, of Maryland,
Mr. Barringer, of Virginia,
Mr. Scales, of North Carolina,
Mr. Scales, of South Carolina,
Mr. Howell Cobb, of Georgia,

Mr. Gayle, of Alabama,
Mr. Albert G. Brown, of Mississippi,
Mr. Morse, of Louisiana,
Mr. Vinton, of Ohio,
Mr. Garnett Duncan, of Kentucky,
Mr. Cocke, of Tennessee,
Mr. Lincoln, of Indiana,
Mr. Bowlin, of Illinois,
Mr. Robert W. Johnson, of Arkansas,
Mr. McClelland, of Michigan,
Mr. Cady, of Florida,
Mr. Keifer, of Texas,
Mr. Leeller, of Iowa,
Mr. Tweedy, of Wisconsin.

Pall-Bearers:

Mr. McKay, of North Carolina,
Mr. Boyd, of Kentucky,
Mr. Calhoun, of South Carolina,
Chief Justice R. B. Taney,
General George Gibson,
Hon. W. W. Seaton,
Mr. Truman Smith, of Connecticut,
Mr. J. R. Ingersoll, of Pennsylvania,
Mr. Benton, of Missouri,
Hon. Justice J. McLean,
Commodore Charles Morris,
Hon. Thomas H. Crawford.

CORPSE

Mr. J. F. Harey, Conductor of the Car.

The family and friends of the deceased.

The Senators and Representatives from the State of Massachusetts, as mourners.

The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives of the United States, preceded by their Speaker and Clerk.

The other officers of the House of Representatives.

The Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate.

The other officers of the Senate.

The President of the United States.

The Heads of Departments.

The Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, and its Officers.

The Judges of the Circuit and District Courts of the District of Columbia, and their Officers.

The Diplomatic Corps.

The Comptrollers, Auditors, and other Heads of Bureaus of the several Departments of the Government, with their Officers.

Officers of the Army and Navy, at the seat of Government.

Members of State Legislatures.

The Corporation of Washington.

The Columbian Typographical Society.

Officers and students of Georgetown College.

Officers and students of Columbian College.

Literary Institutions.

Members of the District.

The Mourners.

Old Fellows.

Citizens and Strangers.

FEBRUARY 24, 1848.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

It has pleased Divine Providence to call hence a great and patriotic citizen. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS is no more. At the advanced age of more than four score years, he was suddenly stricken from his seat in the House of Representatives, by the hand of disease, on the 21st, and expired in the Capitol a few minutes after seven o'clock, on the evening of the 23d of February, 1848.

He had for more than half a century filled the most important public stations, and among them that of President of the United States. The two houses of Congress, of one of which he was a venerable and most distinguished member, will doubtless prescribe appropriate ceremonies to be observed as a mark of respect for the memory of this eminent citizen.

The nation mourns his loss; and as a further testimony of respect for his memory, I direct that all the Executive offices at Washington be placed in mourning, and that all business be suspended during this day and to-morrow.

JAMES K. POLK.

WASHINGTON, February 24, 1848.

Broadsides issued upon the death of J. Q. Adams



Joseph Henry

accomplishment of this undertaking to enlarge the sphere of Education at our University, of the honour and reputation of our Country and of the Glory of God in the Mechanism of the Universe, unfolded in the progressive acquisition of knowledge to the mind of immortal man.”⁶⁵

In the following year Adams performed the same arduous duties for astronomy at Harvard. In his own crabbed, failing hand, on October 27, 1847, he wrote Edward Everett, president of Harvard University, detailing the results of his committee’s examination for the previous year. His gift for expression never failed him. An observatory, he noted, is a “Temple hallowed to the worship of the Creator, raising the Souls of all who are admitted to its nightly disclosures, to a more intimate communion with the author of the Universe and with the ever multiplying wonders of his Creation.”⁶⁶

Adams was not present to sign the report for the following year. He had suffered a stroke at his desk in the House of Representatives in Washington, on February 21, 1848, and had died in the Speaker’s Room two days later. His struggle to create an observatory, both at Harvard and at Washington, did not go unnoticed in the report presented by Josiah Quincy. Quincy noted that Adams’s Presidential message of 1825 had called for the establishment of an observatory but the proposal “received no support, or countenance, from Congress, and was met with ridicule rather than respect.” But eventually Adams’s views began to have their effect on Congress in the 1840’s. “A disposition to found a National Observatory began to prevail in that body, united with a determination, if possible, to disconnect its establishment from the name and influence of Mr. Adams.” History will record, Quincy went on, the

65. In manuscript, Report of the Committee appointed by the Overseers of the University at Cambridge, to examine the Observatory for the Academic Year 1845–6, with the accompanying documents. By Hon. John Quincy Adams, Chairman of the Committee. Read and accepted 5 Feb. 1847. Harvard University Archives, VA II. 10.5 Vol. 7 (Suppl. 1).

66. Report of the Committee Appointed by the Overseers of the University at Cambridge, Massachusetts to examine the Observatory for the Academic Year 1846–7, with the accompanying documents. By Hon. John Quincy Adams, Chairman of the Committee. Read and accepted 20 Jan. 1848. Harvard University Archives, VA II. 10.5 Vol. 7 (Suppl. 2).

establishment of the National Observatory to be the result of Adams's work "entitling him to be regarded in all future times as *virtually the Founder* of the Observatory at Washington."⁶⁷

It may not be too much to say that Adams played the same role in the founding of the Smithsonian that he did in the founding of the National (i.e., Naval) Observatory and that he merits the same praise.

There is little formal acknowledgment, in the writings of Joseph Henry, of the role played by John Quincy Adams in the founding of the Smithsonian Institution. One of the few references occurs in Henry's annual report for 1864 in which he gives a "Sketch of the Organization and Operation of the Institution." In the sketch Henry analyzes the meaning of the provision in Smithson's will to found, in the city of Washington, an establishment "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

He evidently did not intend by these precise terms [Henry commented] to found a library or a mere museum for the diffusion of popular information to a limited community, but a cosmopolitan establishment, to *increase* the *sum* of human knowledge and to diffuse this to every part of the civilized world. No other interpretation of the will is either in accordance with the terms employed or with the character and habits of the founder. The *increase* of human knowledge, by which we must understand additions to its sum, would be of little value without its diffusion, and to limit the latter to one city, or even to one country, would be an invidious restriction of the term *men*. These views, so evident to minds especially devoted to science, were not at once apparent to those whose studies and pursuits had been chiefly confined to literature or public affairs. The first scheme which was presented in regard to the character of the future institution proposed that it should assume the form of a university, but this idea was shown to be erroneous by the Hon. J. Q. Adams, who pointed out the fact that the object of a university was not to increase knowledge, but to diffuse that which already exists. The next

67. Report of the Committee appointed by the Overseers of the University at Cambridge, Mass. to examine the Observatory for the Academic Year 1847-8 with the Accompanying documents. By Hon. Josiah Quincy, Chairman of the Committee. Read and Accepted 18th January 1849. Harvard University Archives, VA II. 10.5 Vol. 8 (Suppl. 2).

proposition, which had many advocates, was that of a large library or museum; but these objects are in a measure local in their influence and tend, like the former, to promote rather the diffusion than the increase of knowledge.⁶⁸

John Quincy Adams and Joseph Henry met at a point in American history in which the prevailing ideas of the society in which they lived were indifferent, if not hostile, to the basic assumptions of their two natures. The causes of this alienation were varied and have been variously analyzed. All agree that the United States showed a remarkable indifference to basic science in the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ Neither the government, as in Europe generally, the universities, as in Germany, nor the new industrial leadership, until the end of the century, provided the needed support to theoretical research. Basic research in the United States at mid-century was in a parlous state. The sources of support for basic science and the conditions of its pursuit, which had existed in the eighteenth century, had disappeared by the 1830's. The corporate, university, and government sources of support that assumed the responsibility in the twentieth century had not yet emerged. In the very midst of this hiatus appeared the figure of John Quincy Adams, an eighteenth-century aristocrat who had outlived his century, attempting to uphold the banner of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake in an age of the common man. As one commentator has put it, "Adams was the last nineteenth-century occupant of the White House who had a knowledgeable sympathy with the aims and aspirations of science or who believed that fostering the arts might properly be a function of the federal government."⁷⁰

Adams's contemporaries could not hear the tune to which he was marching, or see the vision which he saw. William H. Seward, in his eulogy on Adams following his death, noted that

68. *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for 1864*, p. 34.

69. Richard H. Shryock, "American Indifference to Basic Science during the Nineteenth Century," *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences*, Vol. 28, No. 5 (October, 1948), 50-65.

70. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (New York, 1963), p. 158.

If you ask why he seemed, sometimes, with apparent inconsistency, to lend his charities to the Distant and the Future rather than to his own Kindred and Times, I reply, it was because he held that the tenure of human power is on condition of its being beneficently exercised for the common welfare of the Human Race. Such Men are of no Country. They belong to Mankind. If we cannot rise to this height of virtue, we cannot hope to comprehend the character of JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, or understand the homage paid by the American People to his memory.⁷¹

Adams himself expressed this commitment to scientific truth and universal morality when he was asked in 1847 by Brantz Mayer, then undertaking a history of the war with Mexico, for advice on how to go about it. "A Historian you know must have neither Religion or Country," Adams wrote, and doubted whether the history Mayer had in mind could be written at such a time or at any time.⁷²

What linked these two men, Adams and Henry, one essentially an eighteenth-century man, the other essentially a twentieth-century man, both touching hands in the middle of the nineteenth century to found an institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men? Both believed the universe was regulated by laws and not by chance; both believed these laws could be discovered by the achievement of exact knowledge; both insisted that the search for these laws—the pursuit of knowledge—must not be bound by practical considerations.

Adams's concern with exact sciences was demonstrated in his monumental *Report upon Weights and Measures*, prepared in 1821 when he was Secretary of State. His *Report of the Minority of the Committee on Manufactures*, February 28, 1833, similarly reveals his faith in the rationality of a world in which things are precisely known. But his advocacy of an observatory, for the nation, for the Smithsonian, and for Harvard College, most clearly reveals his belief in the significance of exact measurement. As he put it in his report of the Select Committee on the Smithsonian Bequest when he introduced his bill in March of 1840:

71. *Oration on the Death of John Quincy Adams, delivered before the Legislature of the State of New-York, at Albany, on the 6th Day of April, 1848*, by William H. Seward. Published by order of the legislature (Albany, 1848), p. 30.

72. Adams to Mayer, July 6, 1847, Letterbook, microfilm reel 155.

It is, then, to the successive *discoveries* of persevering astronomical observation through a period of fifty centuries that we are indebted for a fixed and permanent standard for the measurement of time. And by the same science has man acquired, so far as he possesses it, a standard for the measurement of space. A standard for the measurement of the dimensions and distances of the fixed stars from ourselves is yet to be found; and, if ever found, will be through the means of astronomical observation.⁷³

While Adams's grandsons, Brooks and Henry, saw chaos instead of order in the nineteenth-century world about them, Joseph Henry peered into the future fully confident that Adams's quest for answers to explain the apparent chaos would be found if knowledge was pursued purely and relentlessly. "A life devoted exclusively to the study of a single insect," Henry wrote, "is not spent in vain. No animal however insignificant is isolated; it forms a part of the great system of nature, and is governed by the same general laws which control the most prominent beings of the organic world."⁷⁴

The achievement of Adams and Henry was that, in a society in which they were, in the contemporary phrase, "alienated," they caused that society to adjust to their views rather than adjusting themselves to the prevailing views of that society. The creation of the Smithsonian Institution is a remarkable example of an establishment formed not in response to the great social movements of a period, but in opposition to those movements. The overwhelming pressures in Congress and out were for practical schemes of education and improvement. The very act of Congress creating the Smithsonian Institution made almost no provision for the support of research and publication. But the Smithsonian, as it came to exist, met the responsibility for support of basic research which the society that created it did not feel until half a century later. For this achievement we have to thank two men, inflexible of purpose, in-

73. *Report of Select Committee on Smithsonian Bequest*, March 5, 1840, 26th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives Report No. 277, p. 20.

74. *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for 1855*, p. 20.

tolerant of error, impervious to criticism. Neither had his entire way. Each, at times, despaired of satisfying his own or his country's honor. But the force of their belief and intellect, fused into an unbreakable and continuing purpose, achieved the impossible. The responsibility laid upon the United States by James Smithson to found an institution in Washington for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men" was met. A bridge between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries was built. A dying man's charge was honored. An unborn generation's needs were anticipated.

WILCOMB E. WASHBURN

Curator, Division of Political History
United States National Museum
Smithsonian Institution

Editor's Note

THE editorial method adopted by the Adams Papers and discussed in the introduction to Volume 1 of the *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, edited by L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961), lv–lix, and in the introduction to Volume 1 of the *Adams Family Correspondence*, edited by L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1963), xli–xlv, has been followed in the transcription of Adams's manuscript lecture on the Smithsonian bequest. The attempt has been made, as Mr. Butterfield has put it, to find "the desired middle ground between pedantic fidelity and readability." The form and spirit of the original text are retained but are reproduced in a manner that is intelligible to the present-day reader. Thus, dashes obviously intended as terminal marks are converted to periods and superfluous dashes removed. Dashes indicating breaks in thought or used as semi-paragraphing devices are retained. The skeptical reader can always refer to the microfilm edition in case he feels a reading is suspect.

Adams's story of the Smithsonian bequest, as befits a public lecture, is a logically connected narrative that needs little editorial explanation. The frequent quotations from messages of the Presidents, reports of the Select Committee on the Smithsonian Bequest, and the two letters of Adams himself to the Secretary of State outlining his recommendations for the use of the bequest (along with the letters of the other gentlemen to whom similar requests for advice were made) are printed in full in *The Smithsonian Institution: Documents Relative to its Origin and History*, Volume 17 of Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections (Washington, 1880), edited by William J. Rhees.

No attempt has been made to explain literary or historical allusions when the reference is obvious or understandable from the context. In one case, when the reference was clouded, a footnote has been supplied.

In a similar fashion no attempt has been made to give the complete names, nationalities, life spans, or accomplishments, of various seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century European astronomers whom Adams cites in his discussion of the Greenwich Observatory. All are listed in standard reference works, and it seems unnecessary to go beyond the context of general astronomical advances in which Adams places them.

Two technical terms have been explained, as unlikely to be known to a general reader of today.

The reference to the Mayor of Washington in Adams's second lecture may surprise those who think that District of Columbia residents have never governed themselves. In Adams's time, Washington had a mayor, and he became, in the Act of 1846 constituting the Smithsonian Institution, a member *ex officio* of the Board of Regents. See Wilcomb E. Washburn, "The Influence of the Smithsonian Institution on Intellectual Life in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Washington," *Columbia Historical Society, Records*, Vols. 63-65 (Washington, D. C., 1966).

Adams's occasional references in his lectures to Senators and Representatives, without specific mention of their names, are not further identified, but are, for the most part, discussed in the editor's introduction. The rhetoric of the lectures falls somewhere between the conventional courtesies of debate on the floor of the House of Representatives and the brutal frankness of Adams's personal diaries.

For the source of the title of the present book, see Adams's diary entry on October 26, 1839, as quoted above in the Introduction, page 16. Adams repeated the phrase in the peroration of his second lecture (see page 88).

The editor is greatly indebted to numerous colleagues who facilitated the work of editing and interpreting Adams's lectures. The principal debt of gratitude is owed to Thomas B. Adams, president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, to Stephen H. Riley, director of the Society, and to the Administrative Board of the Adams Papers for kindly permitting the publication of these lectures on the occasion of the bicentennial celebration of Smithson's birth. The inspiration of the project has been Lyman H. Butterfield, edi-

tor in chief of the Adams Papers, who generously urged a junior colleague to take the major share of the pleasure of preparing the lectures for the press and who lent an expert and guiding hand to the editor throughout the process of seeing the book through the press. The associate editors of the Adams Papers, Marc Friedlaender and Wendell D. Garrett, have been unfailingly helpful. Clifford K. Shipton, director, and Harley P. Holden, assistant, in the Harvard University Archives, have been generous and helpful. John J. McDonough, Jr., of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., has pointed out important Adams references in the collections of the Manuscript Division. Anita Lonnes, of the Smithsonian Institution Archives, has been overburdened but never overwhelmed by my requests. Jack S. Goodwin, librarian of the Museum of History and Technology of the Smithsonian Institution, has never failed to supply—almost instantly—whatever information or aid was needed. Finally, I would like to thank Paul H. Oehser, chief of the Editorial and Publications Division of the Smithsonian Institution, for his support and guidance throughout the maturing of the project.

W. E. W.

Lecture I

Delivered before the Quincy Lyceum, Wednesday, 13 November 1839, and at the Masonic Temple, Boston, before the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association, 14 November 1839.

AMONG the numerous and important objects deeply interesting to the whole people of the North American Union, which have occupied the attention and exercised the powers of the Congress of the United States, and are yet awaiting the result of their deliberations, there is one of a peculiar character, originating in circumstances widely different from those which usually operate in giving occasion to the Legislative action of the National Government; one to which little attention has yet been paid by the People; and, to speak my sentiments without reserve, I fear, not quite enough by their servants, the Government of the Union.

The neglect of this due attention on the part of the People may be fully accounted for, without blame upon them, by their want of information with regard to the facts relating to this interest. The same apology cannot be pleaded for the ineffective action of the Government; at least not to the same extent—of the sluggish action of the National authorities in this case, I ought perhaps to take some portion of the censure to myself—for as one of the Representatives of the People, I have been conscious that my most earnest exertions were due to them, to secure the faithful performance of a purpose for their benefit and that of mankind conceived by a stranger to our country, and committed as a sacred trust, to the honor and intelligence of those to whom the People of the North American Confederation have committed, in trust equally sacred, the Administration of their National concerns.

From the first presentation of this subject to the consideration of Congress, I have taken in it the interest, which a profound sense of

my duty to my immediate constituents, to my country, to the memory of the munificent stranger, who manifested a *confidence* in our Institutions so honorable to himself and to them, and finally to the world of mankind, indispensably required.

The subject is still before the Congress of the United States for consideration—It will come up of course, in the Session of that body now near at hand. The settlement of the *principles* upon which this most beneficent donation for the improvement of mankind shall be made most available to that great result is now to be made—a single error of judgment, a single false step now made in organizing the administration of the funds, or in laying the foundations for the future application of them, might totally defeat one of the noblest benefactions ever made to the race of man, by one of their own kind, and turn to the disgrace of this Nation, an act which was intended to do them the highest honor, and from which it is in their own power to weave for themselves a crown of unfading glory.

I cherish the hope that this subject may be considered as divested of all intermixture of party politics—and I have thought it proper to avail myself of the occasion to lay before you a narrative of the transactions in the Congress of the United States, upon this subject hitherto—of the part I have taken in them, of my opinions, with regard to the solemn duties incumbent upon this Nation, and upon their Rulers and Servants, by their acceptance of this magnanimous bequest, and of what I still propose to do in this behalf, with fervent prayer to Divine Providence for his blessing upon a design, the express purpose of which, is for improving the condition of mankind upon earth.

On the 17th of December, 1835, Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, transmitted to both Houses of Congress, the following Message.

Washington December 17, 1835.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

I transmit to Congress, a report from the Secretary of State, accompanying copies of certain papers relating to a bequest to the United States, by Mr. James Smithson of London, for the purpose of founding

at Washington, an establishment under the name of the 'Smithsonian Institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.' The Executive having no authority to take any steps for accepting the trust, and obtaining the funds, the papers are communicated with a view to such measures as Congress may deem necessary.

The papers enclosed with the report of the Secretary of State were, a Letter of 21st July, 1835, from Messrs. Clarke, Fynmore and Fladgate, Solicitors in Chancery, of Messrs. Drummond, Bankers, Charing Cross, London, to Aaron Vail then Chargé d'Affaires of the United States at the British Court, covering a copy of the Will of James Smithson, with information that there were then standing in the name of the Accountant General of the Court of Chancery, on the trusts of the Will, stock amounting in value to about one hundred thousand pounds sterling; which by the Will were bequeathed to the United States of America; adding that it was necessary that measures should be taken to get the decision of the English Court of Chancery as to the further disposition of the property. That on reference to the Will, it would be found that it was not very clearly defined to whom on behalf of the United States, the property should be paid or transferred: that there was indeed so much doubt, that it was apprehended that the Attorney General must on behalf of the crown of England be joined in the proceedings which it was requisite that the United States should institute. And the Solicitors tendered their own services for this purpose; observing that they acted in the matter for Messrs. Drummond the Bankers, who were mere stake-holders, ready to do all in their power to facilitate getting the decision of the Court, and carrying into effect the testator's intentions.

Mr. Vail, in forwarding this Letter, with the copy of the Will, to the Secretary of State, informs him that it was by its writers, Messrs. Clarke, Fynmore and Fladgate, that he had been apprised of the existence of the Will, and he recommends that they should be employed to institute and manage the proceedings in the British Court of Chancery necessary for obtaining possession of the funds.

This message, with its enclosed papers, was in each house of Congress, referred to a select Committee, who reported in favor of the acceptance of the bequest and of the trust. The Committee of

the House of Representatives consisted of nine members of whom I had the honor of being the chairman, and whose unanimous report I beg leave to read, as it was the foundation of the whole subsequent action of Congress on the subject at that session, and because it contains a statement of all the material facts relating to this donation, and a full exposition of the principles and obligations resulting from it which then received the sanction of both Houses of Congress.

From the papers transmitted to Congress with the Message of the President, it appears that James Smithson, a foreigner of noble family and of affluent fortune, did by his last will and testament, made in the year 1826, bequeath under certain contingencies, which have since been realized, and with certain exceptions, for which provision was made by the same will, the whole of his property of an amount exceeding four hundred thousand dollars to the United States of America, to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

To the acceptance of this bequest and to the assumption and fulfilment of the high and honorable duties involved in the performance of the trust committed with it, the Congress of the United States in their legislative capacity are alone competent. Your Committee believe not only that they are thus competent, but that it is enjoined upon them by considerations of the most imperious and indispensable obligation. The first steps necessary to be taken for carrying into effect the beneficent intentions of the testator must be to obtain the possession of the funds, now held by the Messrs. Drummond, bankers in London, Executors of Mr. Smithson's will, and subject to the superintendence, custody and adjudication of the Lord Chancellor of England. To enable the President of the United States to effect this object, the Committee report herewith a Bill.

But your Committee think they would imperfectly discharge their duty to this House, to their country, to the world of mankind, or to the donor of this most munificent bequest, were they to withhold a few brief reflections which have occurred to them in the consideration of the subject referred to them by the House. Reflections arising from the condition of the testator, from the nature of the bequest and from the character of the trustee to whom this great and solemn charge has been confided.

The testator, James Smithson, a subject of Great Britain, declares

himself in the caption to the Will a descendant in blood from the Percys and the Seymours, two of the most illustrious historical names of the British Islands. Nearly two centuries since, in 1660, the ancestor of his own name, Hugh Smithson, immediately after the restoration of the royal family, of the Stuarts, received from Charles II. as a reward for his eminent services to that house, the dignity of a Baronet of England; a title still held by the dukes of Northumberland as descendants from the same Hugh Smithson. The father of the testator, by his marriage with the Lady Elizabeth Seymour, who was descended by a female line from the ancient Percys, and by the subsequent creation of George III. in 1766 became the first Duke of Northumberland. His son and successor, the brother of the testator, was known in the history of our revolutionary war, by the name of Lord Percy; was present as a British officer, at the sanguinary opening scenes of that great National conflict at Lexington, and at Bunker's hill; and was the bearer to the British Government of the despatches from the commander-in-chief of the royal forces announcing the event of that memorable day; and the present duke of Northumberland, the testator's nephew, was the ambassador extraordinary of Great Britain sent to assist at the coronation of the late King of France, Charles the tenth, a few months only before the date of this bequest from his relative to the United States of America.

The suggestions which present themselves to the mind by the association of these historical recollections with the condition of the testator, derive additional interest from the nature of the bequest: the devotion of a large estate to an institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

Of all the foundations of establishments for pious or charitable uses, which ever signalized the spirit of the age, or the comprehensive beneficence of the founder, none can be named more deserving of the approbation of mankind than this. Should it be faithfully carried into effect, with an earnestness and sagacity of application, and a steady perseverance of pursuit proportioned to the means furnished by the Will of the founder, and to the greatness and simplicity of his design as by himself declared, '*the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men;*' it is no extravagance of anticipation to declare that his name will hereafter be enrolled among the eminent benefactors of mankind.

The attainment of knowledge is the high and exclusive privilege of man, among the numberless myriads of animated beings inhabitants of the terrestrial globe. On him alone is bestowed by the bounty of the Creator of the universe, the power and capacity of acquiring knowledge.

Knowledge is the attribute of his nature, which at once enables him to improve his condition upon earth, and to prepare him for the enjoyment of a happier existence hereafter. It is by this attribute that man discovers his own nature as the link between earth and heaven; as the partaker of an immortal spirit; as created for higher and more durable ends than the countless tribes of beings which people the earth, the ocean, and the air, alternately instinct with life, and melting into vapor or mouldering into dust.

To furnish the means of acquiring knowledge is, therefore, the greatest benefit that can be conferred upon mankind. It prolongs life itself, and enlarges the sphere of existence. The earth was given to man for cultivation, to the improvement of his own condition. Whoever increases his knowledge, multiplies the uses to which he is enabled to turn the gift of his Creator to his own benefit, and partakes in some degree of that goodness which is the highest attribute of Omnipotence.

If, then, the Smithsonian Institution, under the smile of an approving Providence, and by the faithful and permanent application of the means furnished by the founder, to the purpose for which he has bestowed them should prove effective to their promotion; if they should contribute essentially to the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, to what higher or nobler object could this generous and splendid donation have been devoted?

The father of the testator, upon forming his alliance with the heiress of the family of the Percys, assumed by an act of the British Parliament that name, and under it became Duke of Northumberland. But renowned as is the name of Percy in the historical annals of England, resounding as it does from the summit of the Cheviot hills, to the ears of our children, in the ballad of Chevy Chase, with the classical commentary of Addison; freshened and renovated in our memory as it has recently been from the purest fountain of poetical inspiration, in the loftier strain of Alnwick castle, tuned by a bard of our own native land, [Fitz Green Halleck]; doubly immortalized as it is in the deathless dramas of Shakespeare; 'confident against the world in arms,' as it may have been in ages long past, and may still be in the virtues of its present possessors by inheritance; let the trust of James Smithson to the United States of America, be faithfully executed by their Representatives in Congress: let the result accomplish his object, 'the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men,' and a wreath of more unfading verdure shall entwine itself in the lapse of future ages around the name of Smithson, than the united hands of tradition, history and poetry have braided around the name of

Percy through the long perspective in ages past of a thousand years.

It is, then, a high and solemn trust which the testator has committed to the United States of America, and its execution devolves upon their Representatives in Congress duties of no ordinary importance. The location of the Institution at Washington, prescribed by the testator, gives to Congress the free exercise of all the powers relating to this subject, with which they are by the Constitution invested as the local Legislature of the District of Columbia. In adverting to the character of the trustee selected by the testator for the fulfilment of his intentions, your committee deem it no indulgence of unreasonable pride to mark it as a signal manifestation of the moral effect of our political institutions upon the opinions and upon the consequent action of the wise and the good of other regions, and of distant climes; even upon that nation from whom we generally boast of our descent, but whom from the period of our revolution, we have too often had reason to consider as a jealous and envious rival. How different are the sensations which should swell in our bosoms with the acceptance of this bequest! James Smithson, an Englishman, in the exercise of his rights as a free born Briton, desirous of dedicating his ample fortune to the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, constitutes for his trustees to accomplish that object the United States of America, and fixes upon their seat of Government as the spot where the institution of which he is the founder shall be located.

The revolution, which resulted in the independence of these United States, was commenced, conducted, and consummated, under a mere union of confederated Colonies, assuming in its progress the name of States. Subsequently to that period, a more perfect union was formed, combining in one system, the principle of confederate sovereignties, with that of a government by popular representation, with legislative, executive and judicial powers, all limited, but co-extensive with the whole confederation.

Under this government, a new experiment in the history of mankind is now drawing to the close of half a century, during which the territory and number of States in the Union have nearly doubled, while their population, wealth, and power have been multiplied more than four fold. In the process of this experiment they have gone through the vicissitudes of peace and war, amidst bitter and ardent party collisions, and the unceasing changes of popular elections to the legislative and executive offices, both of the general confederacy, and of the separate States, without a single execution for treason, or a single proscription for a political

offence. The whole Government, under the continual superintendence of the whole People, has been holding a steady course of prosperity unexampled in the contemporary history of other nations, not less than in the annals of ages past. During this period, our country has been freely visited by observers from other lands and often in no friendly spirit by travellers from the native land of Mr. Smithson. Their reports of the prevailing manners, opinions, and social intercourse of the people of this Union, have exhibited no flattering or complacent pictures. All the infirmities and vices of our civil and political condition have been conned and noted, and displayed with no forbearance of severe satirical comment to set them off; yet, after all this, a British subject, of noble birth, and ample fortune, desiring to bequeath his whole estate to the purpose of increasing and diffusing knowledge throughout the whole community of civilized man, selects for the depositaries of his trust, with confidence unqualified with reserve, the Congress of the United States of America.

In the commission of every trust, there is an implied tribute of the soul to the integrity and intelligence of the trustee; and there is also an implied call for the faithful exercise of those properties to the fulfilment of the purpose of the trust. The tribute and the call acquire additional force and energy, when the trust is committed for performance after the decease of him by whom it is granted, when he no longer exists to witness or to constrain the effective fulfilment of his design. The magnitude of the trust, and the extent of confidence bestowed in the committal of it, do but enlarge and aggravate the pressure of the obligation which it carries with it. The weight of duty imposed is proportioned to the honor conferred by confidence without reserve. Your Committee are fully persuaded, therefore, that, with a grateful sense of the honor conferred by the testator upon the political institutions of this Union, the Congress of the United States, in accepting the bequest, will feel in all its power and plenitude the obligation of responding to the confidence reposed by him, with all the fidelity, disinterestedness and perseverance of exertion which may carry into effective execution the noble purpose of an endowment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

The Bill accompanying this report, received without opposition, the sanction of both Houses of Congress, and on the 1st of July 1836 was approved by the President of the United States. It authorized the President of the United States to appoint an Agent or Agents, to assert and prosecute for and in behalf of the United States in the Court of Chancery, the right of the United States to

the legacy bequeathed to them by James Smithson, and to empower the agent or agents to receive and grant acquittances for all sums of money or other funds which might be decreed or adjudged to the United States for or on account of said legacy. It required that the agent should, before receiving any part of the legacy, give bonds in the penal sum of five hundred thousand dollars to the Treasurer of the United States, and his successors in office, for the faithful performance of the duties of the agency, and for the remittance to the Treasurer of the proceeds of the bequest—and it authorized and required that the Treasurer of the United States should keep safely all sums of money or other funds, which he might thus receive, and account therefor separately from all other accounts of his office, and subject to such disposal thereof as might thereafter be provided by Congress.

It pledged the faith of the United States, that all the monies or other funds which might be received for, or on account of the said legacy, should be applied, in such manner as Congress should direct, to the purpose of founding and endowing at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

And it made an appropriation of ten thousand dollars to defray the expenses of prosecuting the claim, and of obtaining possession of the funds.

Under the provisions of this act, in July 1836, immediately after the close of the Session of Congress, Mr. Richard Rush was appointed sole agent to proceed to London, for the prosecution of the claim before the English court of Chancery.

You will have observed that in the Letter of Messrs. Clark, Fynmore and Fladgate, to Mr. Vail, some doubt had been expressed whether the bequest itself to the United States of America, would be held valid by the Lord Chancellor of England, and that it would be necessary that the King's Attorney General, in behalf of the crown, should be joined in the proceedings to be instituted by the United States. Had the bequest been pronounced invalid, the whole estate devised would have fallen by escheat to the crown, and it is a signal manifestation of the liberality of the British Government, that far from interposing this claim of the crown, as an ob-

stacle to the full execution of Mr. Smithson's bequest, every facility was afforded, by all the British authorities concerned, for giving it effect.

Previous to the departure of Mr. Rush, I received from him a Letter dated the 2nd of August 1836, of which the following extract, too flattering to myself, will be excused, as more honorable to the writer himself than to me. He says,

When your Report on the Smithsonian bequest came out, I read it with peculiar interest—I will add, delight. It was then the farthest thing from my thoughts that I should ever have any thing to do with it officially. Having yielded to a call to go to England on that object, the importance and dignity of which your Report has so raised up in the eyes of all, I feel that I cannot go, though still in the midst of preparation, without bidding you a respectful and affectionate adieu.

And on the 21st of June, 1838, I received from him a second Letter, for the following extract from which, I offer the same excuse.

London, May 15, 1838

No time or events have impaired the respect and veneration in which I hold your name, or the grateful sense I have of the confidence and kindness in so many ways received from you.

In these feelings I bade you adieu in a Letter, when embarking for England on the Smithsonian business, and in the same, I cannot refrain from telling you under my own hand, that I have accomplished it, venturing to hope that the information so afforded will not be unacceptable though you would have it otherwise. I have the full expectation of returning next month with the money; nothing but a few formal arrangements remaining to complete every thing.

Your report gave the case its true importance, and I indulge the hope you will think, when acquainted with my steps in it, that they have been taken in the spirit of your own views. One of my earliest steps was to place a copy of your report in the hands of the professional men I employed, and doubt not of the weight it gave to all my other exhortations to them, to use all possible promptitude, diligence and care in their course.

On the 6th of December 1838, Martin Van Buren, President of the United States, transmitted to Congress the following message.

The act of the 1st July, 1836, to enable the Executive to assert and prosecute with effect, the claim of the United States to the legacy bequeathed them by James Smithson, late of London, having received its entire execution, and the amount recovered and paid into the Treasury, having agreeably to an act of the last Session, been invested in State Stocks, I deem it proper to invite the attention of Congress to the obligation now devolving upon the United States, to fulfil the object of the bequest. In order to obtain such information as might serve to facilitate its attainment, the Secretary of State was directed in July last to apply to persons versed in science, and familiar with the subject of public education, for their views as to the mode of disposing of the fund best calculated to meet the intentions of the testator, and prove most beneficial to mankind. Copies of the Circular letter written in compliance with these directions, and of the answers to it received at the Department of State, are herewith communicated for the consideration of Congress.

You perceive by this message, that the act of 1st July 1836 had received its entire execution and that the amount recovered of the bequest had been paid into the Treasury of the United States. That amount paid in gold was five hundred and eight thousand three hundred and eighteen dollars and forty-six cents—but the message also informs you, that agreeably to an act of the preceding Session of Congress, this money had been invested in State Stocks—and it is proper you should know how this was done, much I must frankly confess against my own inclination; for in this investment, I could not but discern a fearful foreboding of the danger of the misapplication of these funds to purposes far other than the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

On the 7th of July 1838, the last day of a long and turbulent Session of Congress, an act was passed to provide for the support of the Military Academy of the United States for the year eighteen-hundred and thirty-eight. This was an annual appropriation act, with which upon every sound principle of Legislation nothing extraneous ought ever to be connected. Notwithstanding the explicit recognition of this principle in the standing rules of the House of Representatives, at the very last stage of the enactment of this law, the following section was introduced into, and incorporated with it.

Section 6. And be it further enacted, that all the money, arising from

the bequest of the late James Smithson of London, for the purpose of founding at Washington, in this District, an institution to be denominated the Smithsonian Institution, which may be paid into the Treasury, is hereby appropriated, and shall be invested by the Secretary of the Treasury, with the approbation of the President of the United States, in *Stocks of States*, bearing interest at not less than five per centum per annum, which said stocks shall be held by the said Secretary in trust for the uses specified in the last Will and Testament of said Smithson, until provision is made by law for carrying the purpose of said bequest into effect; and the annual interest accruing on the stock aforesaid shall be in like manner invested for the benefit of said Institution.

At the entrance of this discourse I expressed the hope that this subject might be considered, free from all intermixture of party politics; and in the observations I am about to submit to you, upon this extraordinary predisposal of the Smithsonian fund, I intend no reflection upon it as a party measure, or as bearing upon any members of any party. Whatever of error or of wrong there was in the measure, must be shared alike by both; a case by no means uncommon in my experience of Legislation whether of the nation or of the State; and a case which however indicative of human frailty, would not be without its consolation, if it could teach *all* parties the wisdom and justice of mutual toleration. To the section which I have just read no opposition was made to my knowledge, by any member of the House except myself. It was passed without debate in the hurry and confusion of a concluding Session when nothing can be discussed, and when the most conscientious members are compelled to give many a vote upon trust without examination, when the wariest circumspection may be taken by surprise, and the most untiring vigilance circumvented.

On the 1st of September 1838 the sum of one hundred and four thousand nine hundred and sixty pounds, eight shillings and sixpence sterling, all, except the change, in gold, was conformably to instructions from the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury deposited by Mr. Rush as the proceeds received by him of the Smithsonian bequest, at the Mint of the United States at Philadelphia, and at this final discharge of the trust committed to him, I hope it will be deemed no unworthy tribute of commendation from me, to bear my feeble testimony to the industry, the prudence, and the

fidelity with which his commission had been executed. Of these qualities, as eminently possessed by him, I had before had long and multiplied proof in the execution of public trusts, more comprehensive but not more important, personally committed to him by myself, and whoever knows what a chancery suit in England is, and will follow the course of his proceedings in the performance of his agency, will not hesitate to concur with me in attributing to the same qualities constantly exercised by him in the fulfilment of his duties, the early and successful issue of the claim of our country to the bequest, and the full execution of Mr. Smithson's intent, so far as concerned the commitment of his great trust, to the United States of America.

There was certainly no dilapidation of the funds by leaving them unemployed. For on the 4th of September 1838, only three days after the deposit of them by Mr. Rush in the Mint, the sum of four hundred and ninety nine thousand five hundred dollars, was expended in the purchase of five hundred bonds of the State of Arkansas, for one thousand dollars each, bearing six per cent interest payable semi-annually, on the first of January and July in each year from the said fourth of September. And the further sum of eight thousand two hundred and seventy dollars and sixty-seven cents was applied to the purchase of eight bonds of the State of Michigan, bearing six per cent interest, payable semi-annually on the first Mondays in January and July, from the first of May 1838. The interest on all these bonds being payable at the City of New York.

This investment was made by the Secretary of the Treasury, in compliance with the 6th Section of the act of 7th July 1838, which I have read to you, and my most earnest objections to which were certainly of no character adverse to the present Administration of the general government. My objections were—First, that this authority to invest the fund was what is called in parliamentary language a *tack*, that is, a measure of a separate and distinct character, incongruously introduced into a Bill upon a subject entirely different. This is one of the worst abuses of Legislative power, of which perhaps no stronger illustration could be given than in this very Bill. It was an annual appropriation act, for the indispensable expenses of supporting the military Academy at West-point, during

that year—by tacking upon it this incongruous adjunct for the investment of the Smithsonian fund, every member was compelled on the final passage of the Bill to vote either for this disposal of the fund, or against the necessary provision for the support of the Academy at West-point. The annual appropriation Bills are indispensable provisions to fulfil the sacred obligations, and pay the contracted debts of the station [nation?]. And what may be perhaps quite as effectual a security for their passage without them, the members of the Congress by whom they are enacted, cannot receive their own compensation. Congress cannot without a gross violation of the faith of the nation refuse to pass these Bills. If a measure of doubtful constitutionality or expediency is wedged into them or tacked upon them the freedom of action of every member is outraged, as if to quench his thirst a portion of deadly poison were held up to his lips to be swallowed mingled in a cup of wholesome liquor.

Secondly. That the investment of this fund, by the Secretary of the Treasury in State Stocks was authorized at the rate of five per cent a year. This would have been precisely equivalent to a deduction of one per cent a year from the fund itself, and from the glorious purposes to which it had been devoted by the Testator. And it was a discretionary power given to the Secretary of the Treasury to offer it as a gratuitous donation, or, to call things by their true names, a bribe of more than five thousand dollars a year, filched from this fund for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, to any one State of this Union, from which or from whose representatives in Congress, any deed or vote of dishonor might have been required as the price of the purchase. The section as first drawn made it imperative on the Secretary of the Treasury to invest the fund in State Stocks, at five per cent a year, when at that time the Government of the United States itself was borrowing money by millions upon Treasury notes, at the yearly rate of interest of six per cent. I remonstrated against the whole Section in vain, but the Section was so altered as to authorize the Secretary to invest the fund at a rate of interest *not less* than five per cent a year, leaving him at liberty to require more.

I must do the Secretary of the Treasury the justice to say that he did require more, and that the funds were invested at the rate of in-

terest of six per cent. But he took the Stocks at par. Whether that was their value in the market at that time, I am not positively informed. I desire to pass no censure upon the execution of the Law, and still less to disparage the credit of the States of Arkansas or of Michigan. I believe, as I believed when this Section was made a part of the Law of the Land, that it was a measure radically wrong, but as the faith of this whole Union has been solemnly pledged for the application of the fund to the exalted purposes prescribed by the Testator, I still fondly cherish the hope, and would relinquish it but with life, that this plighted faith will ultimately be redeemed.

I have stated candidly and explicitly my objections to this first disposal by Congress of the Smithsonian funds. There are two other objections, which for my individual self I do most heartily disclaim, but which I recommend to the Constitutional meditations and scruples of that portion of my hearers, who concur in the general principles and approve the measures of the present national Administration.

First, then, this measure was a *loan* by the Government of the United States, to the States of Arkansas and of Michigan. An *assumption* of their State debts—a small portion to be sure of those of Michigan, but to the extent of half a million of dollars of those of Arkansas. When at an early period of the History of our national Government, the revolutionary debts of all the States were *assumed*, by the establishment of the funding system enacted by Congress, what aged man now present, can fail to remember the long, pertinacious and vehement debates, both in and out of Congress, contesting the Constitutional power of that body to assume the debts of the States; even those contracted for the support of the War of Independence. And what man among you is so young as not to remember, that at the very last Session of Congress, a large majority of the House of Representatives passed a Resolution that by the Constitution of the United States, Congress have no power to do indirectly that which they cannot do directly.

And secondly—this assumption of State debts, was also an appropriation by Congress of the public monies of the nation to *internal improvement*. Not merely internal improvement upon objects of great national concernment but upon objects interesting only to a

single State. The debts of Arkansas and of Michigan, thus assumed by Congress, were contracted by the Legislatures of those States for a specie capital of a Bank and internal improvements exclusively within themselves, and if Congress have no Constitutional power to expend the monies of the people for internal improvements—no power to do indirectly what they cannot do directly, where shall be found their authority to appropriate half a million of dollars to assume so much of the debt of the State of Arkansas, contracted for her own internal improvement, and to furnish the capital for a Bank?

And yet this authority was found, and exercised in that little sixth Section of an act to provide for the support of the Military Academy at West-point for the single year 1838—found and exercised, without opposition and without comment, by the same identical persons who resist tooth and nail all appropriations for internal improvement, and who within six months after this appropriation, resolved that Congress possess by the Constitution no power to do indirectly that which they cannot do directly.

I have said, and repeat from the bottom of my heart, I disclaim for myself these objections to the Constitutional power of Congress. There are at this moment existing in this Union upwards of two hundred millions of dollars of State debts contracted for monies expended upon internal improvements. Upon the same principle and by the same authority that Congress authorized the Secretary of the Treasury to purchase Stocks of the States, and appropriated more than half a million of dollars from the Treasury of the United States for the purchase they may appropriate from the same Treasury monies for the purchase of all the Stocks of all the States in the Union, and as this assumption of half a million of the debt of the State of Arkansas, was unquestionably a high favor and benefit conferred upon that State, it gives a perfect right to every other State in the Union to claim an equal and proportional favor and benefit from the Government of the United States. The population of the State of Arkansas is represented in Congress by one member—a proportional assumption of the debt of the State of New York, to the half million of the State of Arkansas would require an appropriation of twenty millions of dollars, and the like benefit to the State of Penn-

sylvania could only be conferred by an appropriation of fourteen millions. There can be no Constitutional objection to this from those who have already appropriated half a million for the purchase of Arkansas bonds. There can be no equitable objection, to a demand of equal favor, made in behalf of any other State, from those who have supplied the State of Arkansas with half a million of dollars in gold, for her institution of a Bank, or her expenditures upon objects of internal improvement.

I might press these objections further by calling to your minds the weight and importance of the State of Arkansas and of her single representative in the House at Washington, upon the contingency of a Presidential election; but I forbear. I hope the wrong done by this first misapplication of the Smithsonian funds is not irreparable, and I yet hope that in the future application of them the sacred faith of the nation, pledged with the acceptance of the bequest, will never be tarnished by the application of them to objects other than the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

Immediately after receiving the letter from Mr. Rush, written at London the 15th of May 1838 announcing his approaching return with the proceeds of the bequest, and of which I have taken the liberty to read you an extract, I waited on the President of the United States, and in a friendly and unreserved conversation with him, expressed the great satisfaction that I felt at the successful issue of Mr. Rush's agency, and my anxious solicitude for the faithful employment of the funds when received to the great and benevolent purposes of the Testator. I observed to him that the most imminent danger of all such public spirited foundations was the perversion of their funds to other uses than those of the founder, or the total waste of them by misapplication. That I could not be without my fears with regard to the destiny of this Institution. That the object of the founder was deeply interesting to all mankind. That the Trust was of high responsibility for honor or for shame to our country, and that I earnestly hoped he would be prepared at the opening of the next Session of Congress, with some specific plan for the investment of the funds so as to secure the inviolable permanency of the capital unimpaired, and the annual appropriation of

the interest, at once to the constant increase of the fund and to the glorious purpose of the founder. That such a plan recommended by him in a Message to Congress, and supported by his personal influence and that of his friends in both Houses, would undoubtedly be carried through with little opposition, and I pledged myself to give to it all the support in my power, both by my own individual exertion, and by whatever feeble influence I might possess over the minds of others.

The President received my suggestions with kindness and courtesy. He concurred entirely in my satisfaction at the success of Mr. Rush's mission, and in approbation of the zeal and ability with which it had been conducted by him. He said that in the interval before the next Session of Congress he would consult the opinions of learned and respectable men in various parts of the Union, with regard to the disposal of the funds, and would gladly receive any further observations that I might be disposed to make, as well as from any other person, whom I might recommend to be consulted on the subject.

I said that from the time of the passage of the Act of Congress of 1st July 1836 constituting the agency for recovering the funds bequeathed by Mr. Smithson's Will, until the certainty fully established that the funds would be realized, I had purposely abstained from all considerations other than of the most general nature with regard to the disposal of monies, of which it was doubtful whether they would ever come to our hands. I had therefore no specific plan in contemplation, and should cheerfully concur in any one which might be recommended by him, and which upon candid examination my judgment should approve. There were two principles which I believed would be indispensable for accomplishing the purposes of the Testator. The first that no appropriation should ever be made from the capital of the fund. That this should be invested as a perpetual annuity at the annual interest of six per cent, and that all the appropriations should be from the annual income.

Secondly—That no part of the appropriations should ever be made for the endowment of any school, college, university, institute of education, or ecclesiastical establishment. The express purpose declared by the Testator being not the education of children

or of youth, but the *increase* and diffusion of knowledge among *men*.

With these two principles established as fundamental laws for the administration of the Smithsonian funds, I should feel a cheering security and hope that there would be no irremediable embezzlement or diversion of them. But my own opinion and inclination would be that the first appropriations, should be applied for several years exclusively to the erection and endowment of an Astronomical Observatory, with an Astronomer, Assistants, buildings, instruments and books, for continual observation of the Heavens from year's end to year's end,—for the publication from time to time of these observations, and for the annual composition and publication of a nautical almanac.

The President expressed no disapprobation of any part of these remarks, and I understood him to receive with pleasure, the idea of preserving the capital fund unimpaired, and confining the appropriations to the yearly income. Of the rest he gave no decisive opinion.

After this interview, on the morning of the 9th of July 1838 immediately before the close of the Session, a Resolution was adopted by the House of Representatives requesting the President to cause to be laid before the House during the first week of the next Session of Congress, all such communication, papers, documents &c., in possession of the Executive, or which could be obtained, as should elucidate the origin and objects of the Smithsonian bequest, and the origin, progress, and consummation of the process, by which that bequest had been recovered, and whatever might be connected with the subject.

In compliance with this Resolution, the President on the 7th of December, 1838, transmitted to the House a Message, with reports from the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury, and documents containing the information requested by the Resolution. The Report from the Secretary of State was accompanied with letters from Mr. Rush reporting the progress and conclusion of his agency. The Report from the Secretary of the Treasury included vouchers from his department showing the amount of the funds and of other effects received from the bequest of Mr. Smithson. The disposal of 508,000 dollars of the money in the purchase of Arkansas and

Michigan bonds; and an important opinion of the Attorney General of the United States, who had been consulted by the Secretary on the question whether the expenses of recovering the bequest should be deducted from the fund, or were a charge upon the government of the United States to be provided for by Congress by appropriation.

After stating the provisions of the Act of 1st July 1836 for the appointment of the Agent to recover the bequest and the pledge of faith of the United States to apply the monies and other funds which might be received to carry into effect the provisions of the Will, the Attorney General says:

From these provisions it appears to me that Congress intended that there should be no diminution of the funds bequeathed for the purpose specified in said will, but that the whole, whatever they might amount to, should be applied to carry into effect the intention of the Testator; and when the object of the bequest is considered, it cannot be supposed that Congress would act in any other than a liberal spirit.

My opinion therefore is, that the amount of the whole money, and other funds received by the Agent of the United States under the Act of 1st July 1836 without reduction, constitute the Smithsonian fund, for the purposes specified in said Smithson's will; and that the whole expenses of prosecuting said claim, receiving and transporting the same to this country, including any additional expenses which may have been incurred here, ought to be defrayed out of the appropriation made by Congress.

In the interval between the Session of Congress which closed on the 9th of July and that which commenced on the 3d of December 1838, I received from the Secretary of State of the United States the following letter.

Department of State, Washington, July 19, 1838.

Sir,—By the will of James Smithson late of London, deceased, property to a considerable amount was bequeathed to the United States, for the purpose as expressed in the language of the Will of 'founding at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.'

The United States having, under the authority of an Act of Congress approved the first of July 1836, accepted the legacy, pledged their faith

for the performance of the trust, in such manner as Congress may hereafter direct, and recovered the proceeds of the bequest, to the amount of about one hundred thousand pounds sterling, the President is anxious, in presenting the subject to Congress, for their consideration and action upon it, to aid his judgment by consulting the view of persons versed in science, and in matters relating to public education, as to the mode of applying the proceeds of the bequest, which shall be likely at once to meet the wishes of the Testator, and prove most advantageous to mankind. The President will be pleased to have, if agreeable to you to give it, the result of your reflections on the subject, communicated through this Department at as early a day as convenient. JOHN FORSYTH

I hope you will observe with pleasure, both in this letter, and in the opinion of the Attorney General, which I have quoted, the reference to the pledge of the faith of the United States given in the Act of Congress of the 1st of July 1836, that the whole fund should be faithfully applied to the expressed purpose of the Testator 'the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.'

Having drawn with my own hand that Act, as it stands without the alteration of a word, upon the Statute book, it has given me heartfelt satisfaction that although there were members averse to the acceptance of the bequest, the Bill was unanimously reported by a Committee of nine members of the House of Representatives; that it was adopted, without a proposal of amendment or a word of opposition by both Houses of Congress, and approved by the then President of the United States. It has delighted me yet more to find that the full import of that pledge of faith has been understood and felt, by the Agent, commissioned for the recovery of the funds, and by the present President of the United States and the Heads of Departments. In my own judgment the mere naked acceptance of the bequest, would have imposed upon the United States the moral obligation of all that was promised in the pledge of faith; but to this moral obligation I was desirous of adding a sanction equivalent to an oath before God, and such I considered the pledge of faith in the Bill. The report which accompanied it contained an exposition of the *principles*, upon which the pledge was founded; for which reason I have taken the liberty of reading it to you now. For although it was accepted by the House, and five thousand copies of it were

printed for distribution by the members, so little interest was then taken in the subject by the public, perhaps from a suspicion very generally entertained that the money would never be recovered, that I believe the Report was never printed in any newspaper, and I doubt whether one in fifty of my present hearers ever read it or knew of its existence till this evening.

The same letter which I received from the Secretary of State, was addressed also to the late Thomas Cooper of South Carolina, to Richard Rush, President Wayland, Albert Gallatin, Rev. Stephen Olin of Boydtown, Virginia, Philip Lindsley, Nashville, Tennessee, and Professor Davis, Charlottesville, Virginia. Letters in answer were received by the Secretary from President Wayland, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Rush, and two from me. One also was received by the President, from the Rev. Mr. Chapin, President of the Columbian College in the District of Columbia, whom the President had personally requested to communicate to him his views upon the subject. These papers were all transmitted to Congress with his Message of the 6th of December, 1838.

But I may no longer trespass upon your time—my own profound anxiety upon this more than national and more than temporal concern, has perhaps misled me to the belief that a historical narrative of this extraordinary bequest, from its origin to its present condition, with a glance forward to its future prospects, would be acceptable to you, though presented with a detail of vouchers and documents not exactly suited to the airy amusement of a popular lecture. It may therefore be sufficient to add that at the last short Session of Congress there was not time for maturing the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution, and that it remains for the future action of Congress.

Lecture II

Delivered by Reverend W. P. Lunt, before the Quincy Lyceum, Wednesday, 20 November 1839, and at the Masonic Temple, Boston, before the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association, Thursday, 21 November 1839.

AT the last opportunity which I enjoyed of addressing an assembly of my fellow citizens from this place I availed myself of the occasion to invite their attention to a subject of transcendent interest not only to them, but to the welfare and honour of our Country, and to the improvement of the condition of mankind upon Earth. I refer to the bequest of James Smithson heretofore of London, of his whole fortune amounting to more than half a Million of dollars, to the United States of America in trust, for the establishment at the City of Washington of an Institution to bear his name, *'for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.'*

I then presented an historical narrative of the communication to Congress, by a Message from President Jackson of the 17th of December 1835, of the existence of this bequest—of the measures then adopted by Congress, accepting the bequest, pledging the faith of the United States, that the whole fund should be faithfully applied to the purpose designated by the Testator—the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men—and authorizing the appointment by the President of an Agent, commissioned to recover the funds then in the hands of Trustees, subject to the decree of the English Court of Chancery. Of the appointment of this agent in the person of Mr. Richard Rush, of the successful issue of his mission, and the deposit by him of upwards of five hundred thousand dollars in gold, at the Mint of the United States—to which a considerable addition reserved by the Court of Chancery, may hereafter be expected. Of the investment of the proceeds, deposited in the Treas-

ury in bonds at an interest of 6 per cent a year of the States of Arkansas and Michigan; and of the two Messages of President Van Buren, one of 6 December 1838, to both Houses of Congress—the other of the next day to the House of Representatives in answer to a call from that body—with which two messages were communicated the important documents relating to the bequest and the opinions of certain persons consulted by the President with regard to the future disposal of the funds. As it is my purpose in these addresses, to give you and through you to the public an account of this commitment in trust of a splendid fortune to your Country, the United States of America, for the benefit of all mankind, of all that has hitherto been done by the Government of the United States for the recovery and investment of the proceeds of the bequest and towards the fulfilment of the design of the Testator and especially of the part that I have taken and yet propose to take for the organization and first administration of this establishment; it may be proper for me now to notice the answers of the persons consulted personally by the President, and through the medium of the Secretary of State.

All the answers received, excepting from Mr. Rush and myself, were from Presidents of Colleges. It was highly proper that they should be consulted, and in every one of the answers there are suggestions, which will deserve the respectful consideration of the managers to whom the administration of the funds may hereafter be committed. But with regard to the organization of the Institution, those gentlemen did not feel themselves called to devise plans or to give opinions.

My own answers have been recently published with the other documents annexed to the Message of the 6th of December 1838. In the course of the last summer they appeared in the *National Intelligencer*, and to avoid if possible too much tediousness I forbear to repeat them *in extenso* now.

In the first Letter dated 8 October 1838 I expressed without reserve my great regret that the monies, proceeds of the bequest, had been invested in Stocks of the States, and my earnest hopes that as it was but a temporary investment, it would be speedily redeemed—committed directly to the faith of the whole Union, and never

more entrusted to the chances of any subsidiary State credit or the pecuniary punctuality of any bank.

I referred to the conversation which in the preceding month of July I had held with the President on the subject, and to the opinions and wishes I had then expressed to him with regard to the organization of the Institution, and the application of the yearly income of the fund.

I repeated with fresh and increased earnestness the wish that the capital fund itself might be preserved entire, always productive of a permanent income of at least six per cent a year. That the appropriations should be made from year to year exclusively from the income, and never encroaching upon the Capital.

I declared explicitly my opinion that no part of the money should be applied to the endowment of any school, college, university or ecclesiastical establishment—to no institution for the education of youth—that being a sacred obligation binding upon the people of this Union themselves, at their own expense and charge, and for which it would be unworthy of them to accept an eleemosynary donation from any foreigner whomsoever. Nor did I believe it to have been within the intention of the testator. For the immediate object of the education of youth is not the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, but the instruction of children in that which is already known. That its result no doubt is to diffuse, and may be to increase knowledge among men but so is apprenticeship to trades and the tillage of the ground, and so was to the antient shepherds of Egypt and Chaldea the nightly keeping of their flocks, for it enabled them, by the habitual observation of the Stars, to trace their courses to some of the sublimest discoveries of Astronomy.

When I said that it would be unbecoming in this great Nation to accept from a foreigner a donation for the education of their children, I must not be understood to disapprove of any grant or bequest by foreigners either to found or endow institutions for the education of youth in this Country. Many of the Seminaries of learning in this Union are deeply indebted to foreigners for such bounties for which far from visiting them with disapprobation or censure I would offer as an individual citizen my tribute of gratitude to the generous benefactors. But these are benefactions to the

Institutions, and not to the Sovereign authorities of the State. I look to the character of the *Trustee*. A grant from an individual foreigner *to the United States of America*, for the education of their children, would seem to me to partake quite as much of sarcasm, as of beneficence, and reminds me of the two rival epigrams of the two English Universities, which some of my respected hearers will remember, but which may perhaps to many of the younger portion of them be new.

Some time about the period of the Scottish rebellion of 1745 George the second sent a troop of horse to the city of Oxford, the University of which was noted for Tory doctrines and much addicted to Jacobite principles. About the same time he sent a present of books to the University of Cambridge, well affected to the Hanoverian succession, and where the doctrines of divine rights, passive obedience and non-resistance were as much exploded as at that time they were in the mind of the Vicar of Bray, a reverend divine of whom you have all heard.

Upon the co-incident occurrence of these two events one of the professors of Oxford composed and published the following epigram:

Our royal master saw with heedful eyes
The *Wants* of his two Universities.
Troops he to Oxford sent, as knowing why
That *learned* body wanted loyalty.
But books to Cambridge sent, as well discerning
That that right loyal body wanted *learning*.

Whereupon one of the Cambridge professors parried the joke by the following:

The king to Oxford sent a troop of horse
For Tories know no argument but force
With equal care to Cambridge, books he sent
For whigs allow no force but argument.¹

1. Charles Edward Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford*, 3 vols., Vol. 3 (London, 1927), Chap. xx, 'Jacobite Oxford,' esp. pp. 41-42, discusses the incident of the battle of the epigrams but places it in the period of the Scottish rebellion of 1715 when George I sent troops to Oxford in October of that year. Martial law was pro-

In relating this intellectual passage at arms between the champions of the two English Universities I hope no one will imagine that I have the most remote allusion to the whigs and tories of our own Country at the present time. Of these I will only say that if we must have party denominations, I should be as little disposed for seeking them from abroad, as the means for the education of our children. Still less partiality should I feel for adopting foreign party names growing obsolete in their native land, as the blooming beauties and the dandy gentlemen of Philadelphia, New York and Boston, flare in fiery new fashions here, precisely at the time, when they are cast off as superannuated trumpery by the belles of the Palais royal, and the walking wonders of Bond Street.

It was not then the intention of Mr. Smithson to commit a trust of more than half a million of Dollars, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men to the United States of America, *because they wanted learning*. The object the requisition of which it was his purpose to promote was not learning but knowledge. The persons for whose ultimate benefit he bequeathed his whole Estate were not the children of the American people, but the whole race of mankind; and in selecting the United States of America, as the Agents for carrying into practical execution this blessing to the whole human family, he paid to them a silent, voluntary, unbought tribute of respect and confidence, such as no courtly flatterer, no laureate bard could lay at the feet of a monarch of the universal globe.

And as the justification of this confidence could only be found in the intelligent and faithful application of the funds to the intended purpose I said in the same Letter that the great object of my solicitude would be to guard against the canker of almost all charitable foundations—jobbing for parasites, and sops for hungry incapacity. I added that for the economical management of the fund, and the

claimed in the town, and the soldiers searched for conspirators favoring the pretensions of James III to the Crown of England. Joseph Trapp, Reader in Poetry at Oxford, 'must have had more wit than Swift allows him,' writes Mallet, 'if he is responsible for the well-known lines' which Adams recites in a version considerably different, from but not inferior to the version recorded by Mallet. Jacobite sentiment still existed in Oxford in 1745, in the reign of George II, when riots occurred there, but the verses cited by Adams seem to belong to the earlier period (p. 52).

periodical application of it to appropriate expenditures, it should be invested in a board of trustees, to consist partly of members of both Houses of Congress, with the Secretaries of the Departments, the Attorney General, the Mayor of the City of Washington and one or more inhabitants of the District of Columbia, to be incorporated as trustees of the Smithsonian fund, with a Secretary and Treasurer in one person, and to be the only salaried person of the board.

And I concluded with observing, that in my judgment, the first object of appropriation should be the erection of an astronomical observatory, for the purposes of the Greenwich Observatory in England, and the Bureau des Longitudes, in France which I estimated would absorb the annual income of the fund, for seven years.

In my second Letter dated 11 October 1838 I stated my reasons for the opinion that the best disposal of the income of the fund for at least seven years would be for the application of it to the erection of and establishment of an Astronomical Observatory at the city of Washington, upon a Scale of liberality equal to any institution of that kind existing upon earth.

Estimating at five hundred thousand dollars the whole amount of the bequest, and its annual income of thirty thousand dollars, I proposed annual appropriations first for the erection of the necessary buildings, next, to constitute a fund from the interest of which the compensation of the observing astronomer, his Assistants and other persons employed in the service of the observatory should be paid, then for the purchase of the necessary instruments and books and lastly for the annual publication of the observations and of the nautical Almanac. I referred to a Report made in March 1826 by a Committee of the House of Representatives, recommending the erection and establishment of a National Observatory at Washington, and to the estimates therein presented, with a Bill, which from objections to the expense necessarily involved in the establishment was never matured into a Law.

I stated my principles for the disposal of the funds to be these:

1. That the most complete establishment of an astronomical observatory in the world should be founded by the United States of America, the whole expense of which, both its first cost, and its

perpetual maintenance, should be amply provided for, without costing one dollar either to the people or to the *principal* sum, of the Smithsonian bequest.

2. That by providing from the *income* alone of the fund, a supplementary fund, from the *interest* of which all the salaries shall be paid, and all the annual expenses of publication shall be defrayed, the fund itself, instead of being impaired, would accumulate with the lapse of years. I added my most fervent wish, that this principle might be made the fundamental Law, now and hereafter, so far as may be practicable of all the appropriations of the Smithsonian bequest.

3. That by the establishment of an observatory upon the largest and most liberal scale, and providing for the publication of a yearly nautical almanac, knowledge will be diffused among men, the reputation of our country will rise to honour and reverence among the civilized Nations of the earth, and our navigators and mariners on every Ocean, be no longer dependent on English or French observers or calculators for the tables indispensable to conduct their path upon the deep.

Referring to documents annexed to the report made to the House of Representatives in March 1826, tending to encourage the application of a strenuous and persevering effort on the part of the Government of the United States, to contribute their effective aid, by this establishment, to the progress of physical and mathematical Science, I added—when the opportunity for this is afforded, by the munificence of a foreigner, without needing the taxation of a dollar upon the People, I cannot forego the hope that this opportunity will not be lost, believing that of all the physical Sciences there is none, for the cultivation of which brighter rewards of future discovery are reserved for the ingenuity and industry of man, than practical Astronomy.

Towards the conclusion of the Letter I said—As I propose the appropriation for seven successive years, of all the income of the fund to this special object, there will be ample time for considering the best manner of appropriating the same income afterwards to permanent establishments for increasing and diffusing knowledge among men. Nothing could be more easy than to dispose of a fund

ten times as large, without encroaching upon the proper sphere of any school, academy, college or university. Not so easy will it be to secure as from a rattlesnake's fang the fund and its income forever, from being wasted and dilapidated in bounties to feed the hunger or fatten the leaden idleness of mountebank projectors and shallow and worthless pretenders to Science.

I closed by observing that I had conferred with the Collector of the Customs at Boston upon the subject, and that after consulting with other Gentlemen concerning it I might perhaps address the Secretary in relation to it again.

I did consult others and among the rest the Governor of the Commonwealth, who expressed himself favourably to the views which I have now exposed to you, as the Collector had also done. Other engagements prevented me from writing again to the Secretary of State before the then approaching Session of Congress.

You have observed the reiterated anxieties that I have acknowledged and the apprehensions I have entertained, that individual speculators in Science and visionary or interested projectors would grasp at this fund under plausible colour of increasing and diffusing knowledge among men, to provide jobs for rapacious dependents, and comfortable quarters for themselves. I have not been unaware that the question would naturally be asked, whether personal interests of my own might not have some influence in giving a bias to my opinions, or in fashioning the designs presented by myself. To dispose of this question at once, and from a sense of the propriety with which it would be made, I have determined in no event to accept or receive any portion of this consecrated fund for myself. Whatever service I have rendered or may render to the fund or to the purpose of the testator shall at least be disinterested and gratuitous. As a representative of the People I consider it a part of my duty to them—to their interests—to their honour. If I can contribute though but a mite to realize the purpose of the founder, the success itself will be my superabundant reward. If my wishes and exertions are all destined to failure and disappointment at least no part of the misapplication of a fund devoted to the improvement of mankind shall be justly attributed to me.

On the 10th of December 1838, the two Messages of the President

of the United States of the 6th and 7th of the same Month, were referred in the House of Representatives to a Select Committee of nine members of which I had again the honour of being the chairman. Memorials from sundry individuals, presenting their respective views and plans for the employment of the funds, as from time to time they were presented to the House, were referred to the same Committee. The plans were all benevolent and one or two of them were recommended in very ingenious and elaborate Memoirs. But all or most of them contemplated Institutes for education and the expenditure of the Capital fund, instead of annual appropriations from the accruing income. The Committee had from the beginning decided that the appropriations ought to be made only from the income, and that they should not be applied to any Institute for Education. There was indeed one Memorial, explicitly praying that the whole fund should be devoted to the instruction of children, as well of the coloured as of the white population. But the Institution by the express direction of the Testator must be located at the City of Washington, and the portion of children of whatever colour, who could possibly receive instruction at that place must necessarily be extremely small and limited, and would solve² the whole foundation into a mere school or College for the District of Columbia.

It will easily be perceived, that the mere proposal of such a project as the education of the coloured population under the superintendence of Congress, would awaken all the State right Jealousies, and excite the prejudices of a portion of the South against the whole purpose of the Testator itself. This was soon manifested by a formal objection made in the Committee to any employment of the funds and even to the acceptance of the bequest.

The Testator James Smithson who died in 1826 had by his will bequeathed in the first instance his Estate to his nephew Henry James Hungerford, with remainder to any child or children that he might leave, legitimate or illegitimate. The bequest to the United States of America was contingent upon the decease and failure of issue of Mr. Hungerford. He enjoyed the income of the Estate, which consisted almost entirely of Stocks in the British funds, about

2. I.e., 'dissolve.'

eight years, residing all the time in France or Italy, and died at Pisa leaving no children, but having assumed the name of a woman with whom he lived. The facts to be established by the Agent of the United States before the English Court of Chancery were, the decease of Mr. Hungerford, without leaving any child. The fact of his death was fully proved. An order of notice was directed by the Court to be published to ascertain whether he had ever been married or had left any surviving child, but the order did not include the words *legitimate or illegitimate*. The reason of which was that by the Laws of England a bequest to any existing illegitimate child by name is lawful and valid, but a general devise to an illegitimate child or children is null and void, and the court of Chancery could not include the call for illegitimate children in the order of notice. Mr. Rush in his reports to the Secretary of State had expressed some apprehension that a spurious claim of illegitimate descent from Mr. Hungerford might be trumped up, by some impostor, and by a fabrication of testimony as easy to procure as it would be worthless of credit, and yet difficult to repel, delay at least for a time the decision of the Court of Chancery to carry into effect the bequest to the United States of America. After the decision of the Court of Chancery was made, and he had the order for the receipt of the funds, he was informed that two claimants had presented themselves at the office of the solicitors, neither of them having any connection with the other; and one of them desiring somewhat importunately to know, if the case could not be reheard in court.

These evidently false and fraudulent pretensions to an immense Estate by a doubly depraved title—a spurious claim of spurious birth—may serve as melancholy testimonies of the gauntlet of rapacious and piratical adventure through which this magnanimous bequest has been made and is yet to run, before it can reach its final consummation of the great purpose of the Testator, the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, by the agency of the United States of America.

But this incident was made the ground of grave opposition to the acceptance of the bequest itself, by a member of the Committee of the House from South Carolina. His opinion was however not sustained by any other member, and the Committee were nearly ready

to make their report to the House, when the subject was taken up for consideration by the Senate of the United States.

On the 12th of January 1839, at the motion of a distinguished member of that body from Rhode Island, the following Resolution was adopted:

Resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring, that a joint Committee be appointed, consisting of seven members of the Senate, and such a number of said House, as they shall appoint, to consider the expediency of providing *an institution of learning*, to be established in the City of Washington for the application of the legacy bequeathed by Mr. James Smithson of London to the United States in trust for that purpose; also to consider the expediency of a charter for such institution, together with the powers and privileges which in their opinion, the said charter ought to confer; also to consider the expediency of ways and means to be provided by Congress, other than said legacy, but in addition thereto, and in aid of said benevolent intention; and to report by bill or bills in the premises.

This Resolution, it will be perceived, superseded at once all that had been done by the House and its committee, upon the two Messages of the President to the House of the 6th and 7th of December 1838. It contemplated an *Institution of Learning*, at the City of Washington, the establishment of which should not only absorb the whole fund bequeathed by Mr. Smithson, but large appropriations of the public monies of the Nation—the ways and means of the People—in aid of it.

Joint Committees of the two Houses of Congress are usual and useful, to conciliate their differences of opinion upon points of detail, in the enactment of Laws upon the general principles of which they were agreed. When the prevailing principles of the two Houses are radically different they can serve only to delay and defeat the Legislative action of Congress upon the subject on which they are raised altogether.

The Resolution of the Senate which I have just read was not indicative of any settled principle in that body with regard to the employment of the Smithsonian fund. This had never come before them for consideration. They had not even referred to a Committee the Messages from the President of 6 and 7 December 1838. The

Resolution takes no notice of them. It disclosed only the principles and views of the Senator who moved the appointment of the joint Committee, and the disposition of the Senate to indulge him in the purpose of his enquiry, in the form proposed by himself. The Resolution was accordingly adopted in his own words, and a Committee on the part of the Senate was appointed of which he was the Chairman.

Although the Messages of the President had been more than a month under the consideration of the select Committee of the House to which they had been referred, yet in deference and courtesy to the Senate, the House immediately concurred in the Resolution of the Senate, and the same members to whom the Messages had been referred were appointed the Committee on the part of the House under the joint Resolution.

The joint Committee had several Meetings, but very little discussion. The Session was drawing to a close, and it was seldom found possible to secure the attendance of a Quorum of both Committees, without which no discussion could be had. A Resolution was now offered by the member of the House, from South Carolina, who had expressed the same desire in the Committee of the House, that the acceptance of the fund should be withdrawn, and the whole sum be sent back for the revisal of the English Court of Chancery, to make more diligent enquiry whether some bastard slip from Henry James Hungerford might not be found, whose title to the whole Estate, might relieve the United States from the burden of a fund and trust for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men. For this Resolution the only voter besides its mover was the member of the Senatorial Committee from South Carolina.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Senate submitted to the joint Committee a Memorandum of the points which he wished to present for their consideration. They related to a Charter of Incorporation for the Institution as a great National University—to grants of lands and appropriations of public monies in addition to the Smithsonian fund—to a preparatory school to be annexed to, and made a part of the institution—to the title, powers, emoluments and mode of appointment of the presiding Officer or Officers, and their subordinates. Sure as I was that no such institution would

be sanctioned by Congress and that the discussion of it in Committee would be mere waste of time I offered as a substitute the three following Resolutions.

Resolved, That the sum of [blank] dollars, being the amount deposited in the Treasury of the United States, proceeding from the bequest of James Smithson to the United States of America, for the purpose of establishing at the City of Washington an institution to bear his name, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, together with what additional sum or sums may hereafter accrue from the same bequest, and so much of the interest, as has become or may become due on the first-named principal sum, until the [blank] day of [blank] ought to be constituted a permanent fund, to be vested in a corporate body of trustees to remain under the pledge of faith of the United States, undiminished and unimpaired.

Resolved, that the said fund ought so to be invested that the faith of the United States shall be pledged for its preservation unimpaired, and for its yielding an interest or income, at the rate of six per cent a year, to be appropriated from time to time by Congress to the declared purposes of the founder: and that all appropriations so made shall be exclusively from the interest or income of the fund and not from any part of the principal thereof.

Resolved, that the first appropriations from the interest, or income of the Smithsonian fund ought to be for the erection and establishment at the city of Washington, of an Astronomical Observatory, provided with the best and most approved instruments and books, for the continual observation, calculation and recording of the remarkable phenomena of the Heavens; for the periodical publication of the observations thus made, and of a Nautical Almanac, for the use of the Mariners of the United States, and of all other navigating nations.

Having reasons to apprehend that there would be no opportunity for discussing these Resolutions in the joint Committee, on the 26th of January 1839 I offered them in the House of Representatives, and had them laid on the table for the consideration of the Members.

After the failure of several appointments for meetings of the joint Committee by the non-attendance of members of the Senate's Committee, the Committee of the House were notified, that the Chairman of the Senatorial Committee was authorized by them to

propose or agree to any report which he should think proper to be made to the two Houses by the joint Committee.

From that time there was no further meeting of the joint Committee, but the Chairman of the Senatorial Committee presented in their name sundry Resolutions, against the employment of the Smithsonian funds for the establishment of an Observatory, to which Resolutions the Committee on the part of the House gave no assent. The Senatorial Chairman adhered to his project of devoting the funds to a great National University, over which he professed that he should deem it happiness and glory himself to preside. But the Committee on the part of the House had already manifested unequivocal opinions adverse to the plan of an university.

On the 6th of February 1839 I presented for consideration the following Resolutions, all of which were adopted by the Committee on the part of the House.

1. Resolved, That the education of the children and Youth of these United States has for its object, not the increase and diffusion of knowledge among *men*, but the endowment of individuals of both sexes with useful knowledge already acquired, and suited to their respective conditions.

2. That the declared objects of the bequest of James Smithson to the United States of America, being the foundation at the City of Washington of an establishment for the *increase* and diffusion of knowledge among *men*, no appropriation of any part of the fund to the purpose of educating the children or youth of these United States would fulfil the intent of the testator.

3. That the education of the children of these United States is a duty of solemn and indispensable obligation, incumbent upon their Parents and Guardians, not for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, but to qualify them for the enjoyment of their rights, and the performance of their duties throughout life.

4. That the United States of America, having by their Congress accepted as a *trust*, a large and liberal bequest from a foreigner, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men; and having pledged their faith for the application of the proceeds of that bequest to the declared purpose of the testator, would neither fulfil that purpose, nor redeem their pledge, by appropriating a fund devised for the benefit of mankind to the education of their own children.

5. Resolved therefore, that no part of the Smithsonian fund ought to be applied to the education of the children or youth of the United States, nor to any School, College, University or Institute of Education.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Senate then, under the general authority from his Colleagues, proposed to report that a board of nine persons, three to be annually chosen by each House of Congress, and three to be appointed by the President of the United States, should be constituted to devise and prepare a plan for a corporation to manage the Smithsonian fund, and for the future employment of the fund—to sit during the recess of Congress, with authority to appoint a President of the board, and also to appoint a Clerk and Printer and to fix their compensations; to report their plan and proceedings to Congress at each session for approbation and revisal, and to form themselves a part of the Corporation to be instituted.

It will readily be perceived that to this project there were in the minds of the Committee of the House of Representatives, insurmountable objections. It opened indeed a prospect of profitable employment and compensation to nine persons under the patronage of the President of the United States and of the two Houses of Congress, and they were directed to report to Congress at their ensuing Session a Plan of an institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, and a Charter for a Corporation of which they were themselves to be members. But the expense of such a board of Trustees would have absorbed at least half the yearly income of the fund, and as the ultimate object of the Chairman of the Senate's Committee was an Institute of Education, which the Committee on the part of the House disapproved, they gave no countenance whatever to this proposal.

It was however necessary that the joint Committee should report, and as the Chairman of the Committee of the Senate had full power from his Colleagues to act in their name at his discretion, it was finally agreed that the Chairman of the Committee of the Senate should prepare a Bill, presenting his own views, and the Chairman of the Committee of the House should prepare a Bill presenting their views, and that both the Bills should be reported at the same time to both Houses for consideration, without other report to either.

The two Bills were accordingly prepared; that of the Chairman of the Committee of the House was laid before the Committee and approved by them, and on the 16th of February 1839, both the Bills were reported together to both Houses. The Bill prepared by the Chairman of the Senate's Committee was afterwards taken up in that body, debated and rejected.

The two Bills, when reported to the House, had a first and second reading according to the usual forms and were referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, the manner in which the most important concerns of the Nation are discussed—but the close of the Session, and of the Congress was so near at hand that there was no opportunity for calling it up and the consideration of the whole subject was necessarily postponed to the new Congress and to the Session now impending.

The bill prepared by the Chairman of the Committee of the Senate contained provisions, conformable to the exposition of his views, which by authority of his Colleagues of that Committee he had presented to the Committee of the House—A board of nine Trustees to sit during the recess of Congress, and prepare a plan of a Corporation for the management and application of the Smithsonian fund.

The bill reported by direction of the Committee of the House proposes the institution of a corporate body, consisting of the Vice President and Chief Justice of the United States, the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury, the Attorney General of the United States, and the Mayor of the City of Washington, all during the time when they shall hold their respective offices, together with three Members of the Senate, and four members of the House of Representatives to be annually elected by their respective Houses on the fourth Wednesday of December, to be styled the Trustees of the Smithsonian Institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

That this corporation shall have power to appoint, from citizens of the United States, other than members of the board, a Secretary and a Treasurer, to hold their offices during pleasure, and to be the only persons in the corporation to receive pecuniary compensation; the services of the members of the board of Trustees to be gratui-

tous. It authorises the appointment of one person to both offices of Secretary and Treasurer, and that the Treasurer should be under bonds of 50,000 dollars for the safe custody, and faithful application of all the funds of the Institution which may come to his hands.

That the sum placed in the Treasury of the United States, as the proceeds in part of the bequest of James Smithson to the United States together with all sums which may hereafter be realized, shall be passed to the credit of a fund to be denominated the Smithsonian fund in the Treasury of the United States; and the faith of the United States is pledged for the preservation of the fund, undiminished and unimpaired, to bear interest at the rate of six per cent a year payable on the first days of January and July to the Treasurer of the board of Trustees of the Smithsonian fund, to be applied to the purposes of the fund conformably to the laws and subject to the revision and regulation of the board of Trustees.

That no part of the fund, principal or interest, shall be applied to any school, college, university, institute of education, or ecclesiastical establishment.

That the appropriations by Congress to the purposes of the Institution, shall be exclusively from the accruing interest, and not from the principal of the fund, Congress reserving the power of investing the fund in any other manner so as to secure not less than a yearly interest of six per Cent.

That 30,000 dollars—part of the first year's interest accruing on the fund—should be appropriated towards the erection and establishment of an astronomical observatory adapted to the most effective and continual observation of the phenomena of the Heavens, to be provided with the necessary, best and most perfect instruments and books for the periodical publication of the said observations, and for the annual composition and publication of a nautical almanac.

That the Observatory should be erected at the City of Washington, under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury subject to the approbation of the President of the United States—and that it should be located on some of the Public Lands in the city, a sufficient quantity of which should be granted as a free gift to the Trustees for the purpose.

That all expenditures made by the board of Trustees should be subject to the approval of the President of the United States—all their accounts reported to the Secretary of the Treasury, and audited under his directions by the proper Officers of his Department—and that the board should report to Congress at every Session the state of the fund, and a full statement of their receipts and expenditures during the preceding year.

A concluding Section provides for the first meeting of the Trustees and for placing the custody of the fund, and the direction of the expenditures authorised by it, under the Secretary of the Treasury with the approbation of the President of the United States.

Such was the condition of the Smithsonian bequest at the close of the last Session of Congress. In the confusion of the last hours of the Session, a proviso crept into the general appropriation act similar to that which at the preceding Session had been obtruded upon the Act making provision for the support of the Military Academy at West Point. In the present case it was inserted in the midst of a multitude of specific items, many of them for small objects, in the following words: "For carrying into effect the acts relating to the Smithsonian legacy, ten thousand dollars: *to be paid out of the fund arising from that legacy.*" The faith of the United States had been solemnly pledged on the acceptance of the fund, that the whole of it should be applied to the declared purpose of the founder. The Attorney General of the United States had given an official written opinion that the charges of the agency to recover the money, and the execution of the acts relating to the legacy, could not consistently with good faith be taken from the fund itself. This deduction of ten thousand dollars was therefore entirely inadvertent on the part of Congress, and I trust the self-respect of the Nation will hereafter restore it to the fund.

In the Bill reported by the select Committee of the House of Representatives, there was proposed a gratuitous grant of public lands in the city of Washington, now lying unoccupied and unsaleable, to the Institution for the erection of the necessary buildings and the surrounding grounds of an Observatory. These lands had originally been gratuitous grants to the public, by the proprietors of the soil upon which the City of Washington was to be

built. They had cost nothing to the people of the United States, and after the acceptance of the trust, and the pledge of faith that the whole fund should be applied to the noble purpose of the founder, I thought it would be a token of kindness towards the purpose itself and of respect to the founder to make this small gift of land, now of little value to the Nation, and which even upon a principle of economy, by being thus occupied would increase by more than its own worth that of the other public Lands in the City yet unsold.

But of this provision in the Bill, I am not myself tenacious. I am willing that the bequest of James Smithson should stand alone in its glory. That it should derive no pecuniary aid but from itself. All I ask of my Country is that she should redeem her own pledge of faith that the whole fund shall be applied to the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

Having stated to you with frankness and in candour the two instances of great inadvertence in the legislation of Congress with regard to this fund, the investment of its proceeds in the Stocks of the States of Arkansas and Michigan, and the reduction of ten thousand dollars from the fund to pay for the agency in procuring it, I ought in justice to all parties in Congress to declare my belief that if there could have been a single hour of discussion upon either of those measures neither of them would have been adopted. When the moral obligations of this Nation with regard to this bequest have been clearly presented to the consideration of Congress or any other Department of the Government they have been recognized, or at least not denied. After the close of the last Session of Congress I visited all the heads of the Departments forming the President's cabinet, excepting the Secretary of State, with whom I had previously communicated my views in written correspondence. I informed them of my intention to call up at the ensuing Session of Congress the Bill reported to both Houses by direction of the select Committee of the House of Representatives of the last Session, and now remaining upon the files of each house. I explained fully to them my own views with regard to the *duties* incumbent upon the nation in the disposal of the funds, my deep anxiety that those duties should be faithfully performed, and my determination to divest myself of all possible bias in my own mind of any personal

interest in the specific application of the funds. And I invoked the aid of their influence with their respective friends in both houses of Congress to redeem the pledge of the Nation's faith, given with the acceptance of the bequest and to promote the cause of human virtue, by the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

My reception from all these gentlemen was obliging and friendly. They all expressed their approbation of my intentions and of the principles that the appropriations should be made exclusively from the income of the fund preserving the principal entire; and that the funds should not be applied to any institute of education. I had reason to believe that most, if not all of them approved of the proposal to apply the first appropriations to the erection and establishment of an Observatory.

My friend Mr. Christopher Hughes, chargé d'Affaires of the United States at the Court of Sweden, being then at Washington on leave of absence, and about to return by way of England to his post, I addressed a Letter to him, enclosing a series of enquiries respecting the history, the organization, the present condition, and administration of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. Mr. Hughes on his arrival in England submitted my enquiries to the present astronomer Royal, Mr. George B. Airy, from whom I have received most obliging and copious communications in answer to my enquiries, which will be of eminent service to the establishment of an Observatory at Washington if such should be the pleasure of Congress.

You have now before you in minute detail, for the dryness of which I must ask your forgiveness, a history of this bequest of James Smithson to the United States of America for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men—of all that has been hitherto done by the Government of the United States, for the acceptance of the bequest, the assumption of the trust and the preparation of the means for carrying it into effectual execution. I have specially exposed the part that I have hitherto taken in these transactions—the principles by which I have been governed, the measures which I have proposed or opposed, and my apprehensions and anxieties, my hopes and fears with regard to the final result.

The responsibility of the Nation for the faithful application of the

funds is great before the world of mankind in this and in all future ages. I hesitate not to say, and I hope you will all concur with me in the Sentiment, that from the *manner* in which this trust shall be discharged by the Congress of the United States, the true character of our age and Country will be justly estimated by our civilized contemporaries of other climes, and by the whole civilized world of futurity. A perpetual annuity of more than thirty thousand dollars placed by a Stranger at the disposal of the United States of America, by the agency of their Congress, is an arm of beneficent power, a tribute of glorious confidence, and a burden of deep responsibility unexampled in the history of the world. Other Nations ancient and modern have made to themselves honourable fame, by taxing themselves to stimulate or reward the inventions of Genius and the Discoveries of Science for the benefit of mankind. What and where are now the conquests of Alexander of Macedon, who wept because there was but one world to conquer? Egregious error! He himself had conquered another world as far more precious than that which he had subdued as the brightest of diamonds outshines the unnumbered pebble that chafes upon the beach. Scarcely were his ashes cold in their urn before his conquered world of matter crumbled into atoms—while his conquered world of mind, his patronage of Science and the Arts, his bounties to the genius and learning of his age, still bear aloft his name in glory brightening and to brighten to the remotest ages. Where are the blood-cemented conquests of Julius or Augustus Caesar, of Trajan, of Constantine, or to come down to modern times of Ferdinand the Catholic, of Louis the 14th, of the autocratrix Catherine or of Frederic the unique of Prussia? What is it that has raised the renown of Lorenzo the merchant of Florence above that of Emperors and Kings, but his patronage of Letters and Science, and what has brought reformed Christendom herself almost to forgive his son Leo the tenth his sale of indulgences? To all these enquiries there is one and the same answer—the homage of mind to mind—the patronage of literature and Science—the tribute of *power* to the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men!

Nor is it to Kings and Princes, to Sovereign Pontiffs and princely merchants that this praise is exclusively due. How glorious in the

annals of the world is Athens, the fierce democracy of Greece! Look into her political history, and it is a record of follies, of vices and of crimes. Survey her intellectual history, and see her self-banished Solon, the artificer of her code of Laws, the admiration of all after-times. Her tyrant Pisistratus collecting the scattered rhapsodies of Homer into the most magnificent Poem that human genius has ever composed. Her accomplished Pericles the elegant arbiter of Greece and of his age. See her proscribe her own Aristides because he was just. See her hang upon the lips of her Demosthenes, the most eloquent of mortal men; and hold the cup of hemlock to the lip of her own Socrates, as a moral teacher second only to the Saviour of the world.

Yet Solon and Aristides and Socrates, the victims of her injustice, were her own sons and it is in *their* renown that we see the glory of Athens. Her *men* were the children of her Institutions. Her population abused their power as all unbridled power is abused. Her Demos was a capricious, violent, cruel, inconsistent, absurd tyrant, as he has been painted to the life by her own Aristophanes, but he had liberty and fostered the empire of the mind. He was devoted to the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men. Athens was the City of the mind, and for ages after she had been successively vanquished by the Macedonian Empire, and become tributary to the Roman eagle she still retained her intellectual supremacy, and became the school of Literature, Philosophy and Morals to the masters of the world. There it was that Cicero sent his son for education in the downfall of the Roman Republic, and there it was that he himself had drank at the fountain of that inspiration which poured forth its floods of unrivalled oratory, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, in the Oration for Archias.

And in modern times the principle of human improvement has been fostered and cherished by the People as fervently as by the rulers of the Earth. The Parliament of Great Britain, the representatives of the People of our fatherland, have expended thousands upon thousands of the Nation's wealth in bounties and premiums for inventions and discoveries, useful to the world of mankind. The Royal Observatory of Greenwich is maintained at an expense of many thousand pounds a year for the general benefit of all the

mariners and navigators of the world. This Observatory was erected in 1676 and the Office of Observator presiding over it has been successively filled by Flamsteed, Halley, Bradley, Bliss, Maskelyne and Pond, all among the most distinguished Astronomers of their times. It is now filled by a successor in every respect worthy of those illustrious names. No equal number of men within the same period have contributed more to the advancement of profound Science or of useful knowledge. Flamsteed's Catalogue of Stars, Halley's ascertainment of the periodical revolution of Comets, Bradley's discoveries of the aberration of light and of the nutation³ of the earth's axis, are among the results of the Greenwich Observatory—by the labours of its presiding Officers Greenwich has become the first Meridian of Geographers, Astronomers and Navigators throughout a great portion of the civilized world; and the discoveries of Newton himself might perhaps not have been accomplished but for assistance from the observations of Flamsteed.

This establishment is maintained at the expense of the British Nation, and by the annual appropriations of their Parliament. Yet James Smithson a British subject devotes an ample fortune to the improvement of mankind in *knowledge*. He selects for the Executors of his trust the United States of America, known to him only as a stripling in the community of Nations: but chiefly of descent consanguineous with his own, and blest with political institutions founded on the rights of human nature. The United States of America through their Congress have accepted this endowment and this trust and have pledged their faith that the whole fund shall be applied to the exalted purpose of the founder: the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men. Oh! my Countrymen—can you think of seeing this fund wasted upon the rapacity of favourite partizans, squandered upon frivolous and visionary mountebanks, or embezzled in political electioneering, without mortification and disgust? How under such a result would your children dare to shew their faces among the learned and polished Nations of Europe? How would your enemies the revilers of your name and of

3. *Astron.*, the periodic oscillation in the precessional motion of the earth's axis or of the equinoxes.

your free institutions exult in your disgrace and clap their hands at your shame? It must not, shall not be!

Fellow Citizens! I am about to take my departure for the seat of Government of the United States in the discharge of my duties as one of your Representatives. I shall, if I can obtain permission from the House, take up this subject at the point where it was left at the close of the last Session. My principles are before you:

1. That the fund shall be preserved inviolable and entire, exceeding half a Million of dollars, and so invested as to secure a perpetual annuity of more than thirty thousand dollars of appropriations every year, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

2. That no part of this fund shall be applied to any institution for the education of children or of youth. By which I do not mean however to exclude all provision for courses of Lectures, in every department of Science. These may hereafter form very important branches of the establishment.

3. That the first appropriations should be applied to the erection of an Astronomical Observatory, and to the creation of a fund from the interest of which all the expenses of such an establishment may be constantly maintained without any charge upon the People or upon the capital of the Smithsonian fund whatever.

In the prosecution of this undertaking, I shall need the aid of your sympathy and the influence of your good opinion. If I fail my principal sorrow will be for the opportunity so providentially presented to my Country of ascending to the summit of glory by her services to the cause of Science and of virtue by the improvement of mankind, and so wantonly cast away. If I succeed in placing upon a firm and stable foundation the practical, permanent, progressive execution of the great design of James Smithson, through the agency of the United States of America, to promote the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men, I shall depart for the sentence of my judge, with a blessing of more cheering hope for the future destiny of my country, and with the soothing consolation that I have not lived in vain.

12 November 1839.

My young friends and fellow Citizens of the Mechanic Apprentices Library Association:

The subject of my Lectures before you is closed. I have spoken to you and to this assembly of a magnanimous and munificent bequest from a foreigner to your Country, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men. I have spoken to you, it may be more than you have thought exactly suitable to good taste, of myself. Let me now before parting from you forever address a few words specially to *you*.

It has been my fortune to receive a great number of invitations from literary and political associations to address them which I have been compelled most unwillingly and reluctantly to decline. My advanced and advancing age, often infirmities, a voice broken and threatened with extinction, and multiplied engagements of business public and private have constrained me to ask the indulgence of being excused from addressing Societies of men in every respect entitled to my esteem, and whose very wish to hear me was a precious honour and a weighty obligation.

But when I received the Letter of your President conveying to me the request of your Lecture Committee, the words *Mechanic Apprentice Library Association*, had each in itself, and all in their combination, an adamant of attraction which it was impossible to resist, and I said to myself I will address them were it to cost me my Life.

The word *Mechanic* imports a man the labours of whose life are devoted to providing for his fellow men the comforts and enjoyments of civilized animal life. His occupation is the result of civilization in its highest stage. In the first stage of human Society, the hunter state, there are no Mechanics, but the want of them is the first symptom of the advance of the Savage to the civilized man, as in all our Treaties with the Indian tribes the first stipulation upon which they insist is that we should send to reside among them, a blacksmith.

In the second stage of Society, the pastoral state, in addition to the blacksmith there are needed a few other professional mechanics. The butcher of the domestic animal must supply the place of the hunter's own hand which brings his game to the earth. The fleece of the sheep and the hide of the bullock, are to be wrought into gar-

ments for the shepherd tribe. The spinster, the weaver, the tanner, the currier, the taylor and the shoemaker become essential artificers to provide the shepherd with cloathing, and the tent maker to prepare a shelter for his head. And when he has made provision for the *necessities* of his nature, then comes the pride of ornament and the elegance of taste—properties exclusively belonging to man, and attributes of his immortal nature. Then he plunges into the bowels of the Earth and brings out the iron, the silver and the gold—then he penetrates the solid rock and opens to the radiance of the Sun, the emerald and the sapphire, the ruby and the diamond, the carbuncle and the chrysolite. The Gold and Silversmith, the lapidary and the jeweller succeed to the rougher toils of the miner. They shape the stones into beauty of form and polish them to dazzle the eye. Earth and animated nature are ransacked for glittering colours—the blue the purple the scarlet—the fine twined linen are wrought into holy raiment for the priests and while the bells encircle his skirts to sound his entrance into the Sanctuary to the ears of the People, the engravers of the signet have inscribed the names of the twelve tribes on the square of twelve precious stones on the ephod pendent upon his breast, the goldsmith has covered the mitre upon his brow, the sum of all his duties in Holiness to the Lord.

But the Mechanics of the pastoral state are few in comparison with those which become necessary to man in the third stage of civilization, when he becomes a tiller of the ground, fixed to the soil by a permanent habitation and raising his principal subsistence from the cultivation of grain and roots, the vineyard, the orchard and the garden. In that condition of life the animals of the forest tamed and domesticated for the use of man are more numerous than in the pastoral state. To the horse, the bullock, the sheep and the goat, are added the swine; and instead of the camel and dromedary, are substituted as beasts of burden the mule and the ass. The fowls of the air too become tributary to the subsistence and enjoyment of man the tiller of the ground, tamed to his purpose by domestication. But even in this stage of his condition the professional mechanic is comparatively rare and unskilful. The farmer and his family bake their own bread, butcher their own meat, spin, knit or weave their own garments and brew their own beer, or press the

fruits of their own vineyard or orchard for their beverage. This condition is perhaps the most favourable of all to individual independence and to secluded virtue. But to the happiness of social life, to the practice of the most exalted virtues, and to the exercise of the highest faculties bestowed by God upon man there is needed a fourth and last stage of civilization, not incompatible with, but auxiliary to, and indissolubly united with the third—I mean that in which men are congregated into cities; where man, the merchant and mechanic, united in religious and political association with man the tiller of the ground, carries to the utmost height of his power the exercise of his faculties for the improvement, elevation and enjoyment of his condition upon earth.

And here it is, in the populous and crowded city, amidst the din of industry and the busy hum of men, that the profession of the Mechanic shines forth in all its glory. Here it is that in the application of mind to matter, are discovered the transcendent wonders of the division of labour to the multiplication of human power. Here it is that by the combination of a wheel and a screw animated with a ray of intelligence in the mind of man, are made to annihilate time and space and to perform the daily task of a million of human hands in the evolution of an hour. Here it is that instead of the solitary blacksmith, that man the hunter is obliged to borrow or to purchase from his civilized brother. I see before me in a city of less than one hundred thousand souls, I see before me the blooming youth of three hundred apprentices: the future worthy representatives of as many mechanic trades.

And if the word Mechanic was thus suited to awaken all these emotions in my soul, how with the feelings of a man could it fail to affect my heart when in immediate connection with it I found the word *Apprentice*, and was informed by your President that your Society consists exclusively of Apprentices, so that he who ceases to be an Apprentice ceases also to be one of your members. As a citizen and as a man how could I hear the word Apprentices pronounced without ejaculating a prayer to God for your virtue and usefulness and prosperity here and for the reward of good and faithful servants hereafter? Myself a father, how could I fail to think not only of yourselves, but of the fathers and mothers and other

affectionate relatives whose heaving bosoms and palpitating hearts swell and beat for you, and whose earthly happiness is bound up in your industry, in your good conduct, in your faithful performance of your duties, in your welfare and prosperity?

It was said by one of the illustrious Statesmen of Greece, whose name I have already mentioned to you, upon the disastrous issue of a battle in which many of the *young* men of Athens had perished, that it was as if the *Spring* had been cut off from the year. You, my friends, are the Spring of your Country's year. I cannot speak to you of your specific *duties*—you know them all—to yourselves, to your parents, to your friends, to your Country, to your God. And first of all I say to yourselves, for it was a maxim of all ages when the dramatic Poet of England spoke through a father wise in the ways of the world to a departing Son:

This above all: to thy own self be true
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Nor was the word *Library* less adapted to fill my mind with sentiments of respect, of kindness and of regard. In a long life spent amidst the turmoil of political strife, the dangers and vicissitudes of National War, in travel on the tempestuous Ocean, over desolate and barren wilds, and through thrilling regions of thick ribbed ice—often persecuted with slander, often encountered and more than once overpowered by competition, while the sweetest consolations have been found in the bosom of domestic affection, the Soul's calm sunshine and the heart felt joy have ever welcomed me to the Library. It was the oft repeated saying of one not unknown to you, in fame, the son of a mechanic farmer, and entitled to all my reverence and affection, that there was not a bad book in the world—Not that he understood this affirmation to the letter, but authorised by the example of the Saviour himself it was an hyperbolical figure to inculcate a solemn truth.

If then the word Library standing by itself has to my ears a fascinating charm, how much must its attractions have been quickened by its contraction with the words mechanic and apprentice—and then to crown the compound sentiment of my Soul, the term *Asso-*

ciation, presenting images of harmony and united energy in one common useful and honourable pursuit, a brotherhood of intellectual power marching in firm and unbroken phalanx to the common improvement in the condition of all—when such an assemblage of my fellow citizens honoured me with an invitation to address them, can it be wondered that with the consciousness of blunted instruments and organs all decayed I should have exclaimed in the fullness of my heart—nothing shall deter me! I will address them, were it to cost me my life!

And upon what subject more appropriate to the time, to the place, to the Society which you have formed and to the objects of your pursuit, could I discourse to you than upon the bequest of James Smithson to the United States of America, for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men? It is your own cause. My friends! If using the privilege of my years I may presume to give you a word of parting advice I would say to you—retain and venerate the memory of that man—and when, as soon you must—when you come to enter upon the threshold of active life, when you come to take part in the affairs of your Country, and to exercise the rights of the citizen, your portion of the sovereignty of the land, look with scrutinizing eye to the conduct of the measures of that Congress which has pledged your faith and that of your fathers to the promise that the whole fund shall be devoted faithfully to the purpose of the Testator. Hold your future Representatives in Congress to a strict account for the application of the monies from year to year, and in taking note of their measures fail not to observe their results. See how and in what respects useful knowledge shall be increased and diffused among men, by the agency and the labours of the Smithsonian Institution. The knowledge of the mechanism of the Universe has been acquired by the instrumentality of Astronomical Observations. Copernicus and Galileo, Tycho Brahe and Kepler, Newton, LaPlace and Bowditch have made their Revelations to the world of Science through the medium of Astronomical Observations. The Greenwich observatory has rectified the longitudes of the globe, by watching the wanderings of the Moon among the myriads of starry worlds that bespangle the Heavens. The discoveries of Flamsteed and Halley and Bradley and Herschell, and Olbers

and Piazzi are all the disclosures of Astronomical Observatories. Nature reveals her secrets by degrees. But she is a coy mistress. She must be woo'd and will not unsought be won. The Shepherds of Egypt, by watching the annual returns of the dog-star discovered that the revolution of the year included the fragment of a day. By watching the movements of the Planet Mars, and applying the calculations of Arithmetic to that beautiful poetical fancy in the dream of Scipio the music of the Spheres, Kepler discovered the Laws of the Solar System—and Newton by asking himself the simple child-like question why the apple fell from the tree while the unnumbered stars of the firmament remain fixed in their courses was led from Nature up to Nature's God, and found that the system of the material universe was governed by the one universal law of gravitation.

But my friends I linger with you too long. I bid you now in all probability a last farewell. I go to mingle again in the sharp and angry controversies of your National Councils, and to debate in bitterness of Soul upon banks, and currency and independent Treasuries, and specie clauses and gold and silver and paper—perhaps upon what new form shall be placed the unbending system of extermination to the indigenous children of this hemisphere—perhaps in the edifying struggle to amalgamate the peculiar institution of domestic Slavery with the eternal truths of the declaration of Independence—perhaps in hopeless and unavailing efforts to save your noble inheritance of the public lands from electioneering fraud and pseudo-patriotic plunder. Perhaps upon Tariffs and domestic industry, the protection of Cotton and the dereliction of the fisheries; the breeding of the silk worm and the cultivation of the *morus multicaulis*.⁴ As all these questions may variously affect the inter-

4. The *Morus multicaulis* is described in Jonathan Holmes Cobb's *A Manual Containing Information Respecting the Growth of the Mulberry Tree, with Suitable Directions for the Culture of Silk*, 4th ed. (Boston, 1839), as a 'new and most valuable species of Mulberry, for the nourishment of the silk worm . . .' (p. 27). The species is discussed on pp. 27–35 and 131–41. Cobb, of Dedham, Massachusetts, had brought out the first edition of his book in 1831 with the support of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A copy of the 1831 edition, with John Quincy Adams's signature on the flyleaf, is listed in *A Catalogue of Books of John Quincy Adams Deposited in the Boston Athenaeum. With Notes on Books, Adams Seals and Book-Plates* by Henry Adams. With an introduction by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston, 1938), pp. 69, 91. See also Constantine S. Rafinesque, *New Flora and Botany of North America* (Philadelphia, 1836), p. 48.

ests of my constituents, your interests and the rights of human nature, I hope to be found assiduously at my post, agitated by many fears, cheered by few hopes, and anxious only to discharge my duty to my Country. But amidst all these topics of discussion, there will not in my deliberate judgment be one more deeply affecting the honour and good name of this Nation, or the dearest interests of yourselves and your posterity, than the bequest of James Smithson to the United States of America for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.

14 November 1839.

[This article is printed for a special purpose, but is not intended in its present style for the public.]

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

General considerations which should serve as a guide in adopting a plan of organization.

1. Will of Smithson The property is bequeathed to the United States of America, "to found at Washington, under the name of the Smithsonian Institution, an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men."

2. The bequest is for the benefit of mankind. The government of the United States is merely a Trustee to carry out the design of the testator.

3. The Institution is not a national establishment, as is frequently supposed, but the establishment of an individual and is to bear his name.

4. The objects of the Institution are, 1st, to increase, and 2d, to diffuse knowledge among men.

5. These two objects should not be confounded with each other. The first and most important is to increase the existing stock of knowledge, and the second to disseminate knowledge thus increased among men. Most of the plans heretofore proposed for the organization of the Institution have reference exclusively to the diffusion of knowledge.

6. The will makes no restriction in favour of any particular kind of knowledge, hence all branches are entitled to a share of attention.

7. Knowledge can only be increased by the promotion of new discoveries in its different departments, and can only be generally diffused among men by means of the press.

8. The plan of organization should be simple and of easy reduction to practice. It should also be susceptible of receiving modifications or of being abandoned without involving a sacrifice of the funds.

9. The organization should be such as to enable it to produce results in the way of increasing and diffusing knowledge, which existing Institutions in our country cannot produce.

10. In order to make up for the loss which has been occasioned by the delay of eight years in establishing the Institution, a considerable portion of the interest which has accrued, should be added to the principal.

11. The funds are small. Economy should be consulted in the construction of the building; and not only the first cost of the edifice should be considered, but also the continual expense of keeping it in repair, as well as of the support of the establishment necessarily connected with it. There should also be but few individuals permanently supported by the Institution.

12. The plan and dimensions of the building should be determined by the plan of the organization, and not the reverse.

12. It should be recollected that mankind in general are to be benefitted by the bequest, and therefore, all unnecessary expenditure on local objects is a perversion of the trust.

J. Q. Adams's copy of October, 1847, version of Joseph Henry's
"Programme of Organization" of the Smithsonian Institution

Plan of organization of the Institution in accordance with the foregoing considerations.

TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE. It is proposed, 1st, To stimulate men of talent, in every part of the Country, and the World, to make original researches by offering suitable rewards, and 2nd, To appropriate annually a portion of the income for particular researches.

TO DIFFUSE KNOWLEDGE. It is proposed, 1st, To publish a series of periodical reports on the progress of all branches of knowledge, and 2nd, To publish occasionally separate Treatises on subjects of general interest.

Details of the plan to increase Knowledge.

I. By stimulating researches.

1. Rewards offered for original memoirs on all branches of knowledge.

2. The memoirs thus procured to be published in a quarto form, and entitled Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge.

3. No memoir, on subjects of physical science, to be accepted for publication which does not form a positive addition to human knowledge, and all unverified speculations to be rejected.

4. Each memoir presented to the Institution to be submitted for examination to a commission of persons of reputation for learning in the branch to which the article pertains, and to be accepted for publication, only in case the report of this commission is favorable.

5. The commission to be chosen by the Officers of the Institution, and the name of the Author, as far as practicable, concealed, until a favourable decision shall have been made.

II. Increase of knowledge ; By appropriating a portion of the Income annually to special objects of research, under the direction of suitable persons.

1. The objects and the amount appropriated to be recommended by Counsellors of the Institution.

2. Appropriation in different years to different objects ; so that in the course of time, each branch of knowledge susceptible of increase, may receive a share.

3. The results obtained from these appropriations, to be published in the transactions of the Institution.

4. Examples of objects for which appropriations may be made.

(1.) System of extended Meteorological Observations for solving the problem of American Storms.

(2.) Geological, Magnetical and Topographical surveys to collect materials for the formation of a physical Atlas of the United States.

(3.) Solution of experimental problems, such as weighing the earth : New determination of the velocity of electricity, and of light : chemical analysis of soils and plants : Collection and publication of articles of science, accumulated in the offices of Government.

(4.) Institution of statistical enquiries with reference to Physical, Moral, and Political Subjects.

- (5.) Historical researches and accurate surveys of places celebrated in History.
- (6.) Ethnological researches. Particularly explorations and accurate surveys of the remains of the ancient inhabitants of our country.
-

Details of the plan for Diffusing Knowledge.

1. By the publication of a series of Reports on the progress and the changes of all branches of knowledge.
 1. These reports to be furnished by collaborators, consisting of men eminent in the different branches of knowledge,
 2. Each Collaborator to be furnished with all the Journals, domestic and foreign, necessary to the compilation of his reports; to be paid a certain sum for his labors, and his name to appear on the title page of the report.
 3. The reports to be published in separate parts, so that persons interested in a particular branch can procure the parts relating to it without purchasing the whole.
 4. The reports made to Congress, for publication and partial distribution.

The following are some of the subjects which may be embraced in the Reports.

I. PHYSICAL CLASS.

1. Physics, including Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and Meteorology.
2. Natural History, including Botany, Zoology and Geology.
3. Agriculture.
4. Application of Science to Arts.

II. MORAL AND POLITICAL CLASS.

5. Ethnology, including History, Antiquities, Philology, &c.
6. Statistics and Political Science.
7. Mental and Moral Philosophy.
8. Law and Legislation, or a Political Register of the World.

III. LITERATURE AND THE FINE ARTS.

9. Modern Literature, including that of Foreign Nations.
 10. The Fine Arts, including Painting, Engraving, Sculpture Architecture, Landscape Gardening.
 11. Bibliography.
 12. Obituary notices of distinguished individuals.
-

Plan of Organization, in accordance with the terms of the compromise between the two modes of increasing and diffusing knowledge.

1. According to this compromise, the income of the Institution is to be divided into two equal parts.

2. One part to be appropriated, to increase and diffuse knowledge by means of publications and researches, agreeably to the scheme before given,

3. The other part to be appropriated to the increase and diffusion of knowledge by means of collections of books, and objects of Nature and Art.

4. Under this plan of organization, at least three officers will be required, viz :

The Secretary,

The Librarian,

The Naturalist.

5. The duty of the Secretary, besides general superintendence will be, to act as Professor of General Physics ; to make original researches ; to report to the Regents annually the state of the Institution and the researches which have been made ; to give an account of the memoirs which have been received for publication ; and to edit, with the assistance of the other officers, the publications of the Institution.

6. The duty of the Librarian ; to act as Professor of Ethnology ; to take charge of all collections of Art ; to form a Library, which at first shall consist of books necessary in carrying out the other parts of the plan ; to procure catalogues of all the books in the different Libraries of the United States ; to gradually form a supplementary Library ; to collect all the information necessary for rendering the Institution a centre of Bibliographical knowledge, whence the student can be directed where any book, which may be required, can be found ; to report on plans of Libraries, and to assist in editing the publications of the Institution.

7. The duties of the Naturalist ; to act as Professor of Natural History ; to take charge of all collections in his own department ; to effect exchanges of specimens with other Institutions ; to assist in editing the publications ; to share with the Secretary so much of Chemistry, as relates to organized compounds, and to make original researches in his own line.

8. It should also be the duty of each officer of the Institution to give occasionally a short course of Lectures, on some part of the branches of knowledge entrusted to his care.

9. It shall be the duty of the Secretary and Assistants, during the session of Congress to illustrate new discoveries in Science and to exhibit new objects of Art.

10. It is believed that the collections in Natural History will increase by donation, as rapidly as the income of the Institution can make provision for their reception, and therefore it will not be necessary to purchase any articles of this kind.

11. Attempts should be made to procure for the Gallery of Arts, plaster casts of the most celebrated articles of ancient and modern sculpture.

12. The Arts may be encouraged by providing a room, free of expense, for the exhibition of the objects of the Arts Union.

13. Small appropriations annually made for models of Antiquities.

14. Also for articles of apparatus of physical research and illustration.

